

Information for patients and carers

Pulmonary Nodules

This leaflet is for people who have been found to
have a pulmonary nodule



What is a pulmonary nodule?

A pulmonary nodule is a small round area that is more solid than normal lung tissue. They are often referred to as a “shadow” or a “spot on the lung”. Nodules can range from 1mm up to 30mm (3cm) in size. Anything larger than this is called a “lung mass”.

What causes pulmonary nodules?

- Old scars
- Infections (current or old)
- Mucus plugs
- Inflammatory lung disease eg sarcoidosis/rheumatoid arthritis
- Smoking
- Dust exposures
- Early cancer
- TB
- Other causes.

The vast majority of pulmonary nodules are benign (non-cancerous). They are often found by accident (incidentally) on a chest x-ray or CT scan. In a small number of people the nodule can be a very early lung cancer or occasionally a secondary cancer that has spread from elsewhere in the body

What treatment will I have?

The chest specialist team will discuss your information and CT scan at a team meeting with other specialists such as radiologists. Sometimes it is clear on a CT scan that this nodule is a benign lymph gland or is a stable nodule that had been present on previous CT scans you may have had over the years, in which case you don't need to have any further scans or investigations.

More often a repeat CT scan will be arranged to monitor the nodule. This is usually done 3 months after your first scan. Usually, it will be necessary to continue this surveillance with CT scans every year for a number of years. This is called a surveillance plan. The number of scans you have will depend on the characteristics of the nodule as well as:

- Your age
- If you smoke/have smoked previously
- Your general health

In some cases you may have another type of scan arranged called a PET CT scan.

If the nodule grows or changes in some way we may arrange for you to have further tests.

What if I am still smoking?

Pulmonary nodules have increased potential to become cancerous with continued smoking. Quitting smoking is one of the most important lifestyle changes that you can do to improve your long-term health and to reduce your risk of lung cancer.

Please do not hesitate to ask your doctor or a member of the respiratory team if you require support or advice to quit smoking.

What if my nodule is cancer?

If your pulmonary nodule does turn out to be lung cancer, it is most likely an early-stage lung cancer for which there are many treatment options, usually with the intention to cure, rather than slowing it down. Please do not hesitate to discuss your concerns with a member of the respiratory team.

How will I get my results?

You will be informed of your results of your scan either by letter, telephone consultation or at an outpatient appointment. Please note that following your CT scan we cannot provide any results until it has been reported by a radiologist. Your GP will also be kept informed about your investigations and progress.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please contact:

Lung patient Navigator at-

Email: lungnavigator@lthtr.nhs.uk or Tel: 07512 191479

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk

www.nhs.uk

www.accessable.co.uk

www.patient.co.uk

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

Please ask a member of staff if you would like help in understanding this information.

This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

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