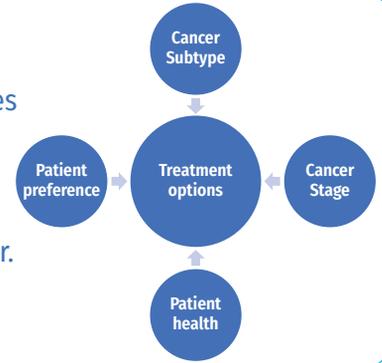


Treatment of Small Cell Lung Cancer

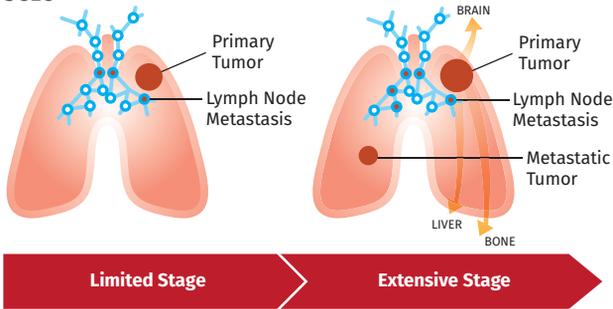
There are several types of treatment for Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC). You and your healthcare team will discuss which choice is best for you based on the stage of lung cancer you have, symptoms, your preferences and any other health problems you may have. Lung cancer treatments continue to improve as new discoveries are being made, so it is important to discuss all your possible options with your healthcare team. This fact sheet focuses on the treatment of small cell lung cancer. For additional information about lung cancer, see our other ATS Patient Information Series fact sheets listed under the 'Resources' section.



There are two main types of lung cancer: Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer (NSCLC) and Small Cell Lung Cancer (SCLC). NSCLC is more common than SCLC. Treatment is different depending on the type or sub-type of lung cancer you have.

The treatment approach for SCLC is discussed here. For more information on NSCLC see ATS Patient Information Series fact sheets on the treatment of early and advanced stage NSCLC (ATS Patient Information Series at www.thoracic.org/patients).

SCLC



How does the stage of my cancer determine the treatment I receive?

Staging is a process for defining how much cancer is within your body (see ATS Patient Information Series fact Sheet What is Lung Cancer Staging? at www.thoracic.org/patients). SCLC is divided into “limited” and “extensive” stages. Limited stage SCLC occurs when the lung cancer is limited to one lung with or without spread to nearby lymph nodes. Extensive stage occurs when the cancer has spread to the other side of the chest or to other organs such as the liver, bone, and/

or brain. In addition to other scans of the body, a CT or MRI of your brain is performed to help your healthcare team determine the stage of your cancer.

Only rarely is surgery an option for people who have limited stage disease. Surgery is only recommended for people where the cancer is found to be in a small area of the lung. If the person does not have surgery with limited stage disease in a small area, then a special type of radiotherapy, stereotactic body radiation therapy (SBRT) may be an option.

A combination of chemotherapy (drugs that kill fast growing cells including the cancer cells) and radiation therapy (high energy x-rays) are used in both limited and extensive stage disease. Immunotherapy (drugs that use your own immune system to kill the cancer) can also be used in extensive stage disease.

Which treatments are used for SCLC?

The following table lists the range of possible treatment options for SCLC. Each person with lung cancer has different factors that need to be considered for a treatment plan, so what may be the best for one person may not be best for you.

SCLC	Treatment
Limited Stage	Surgery or SBRT (only rarely) Chemotherapy Radiation Palliative care
Extensive Stage	Chemotherapy Radiation (for symptom relief) Immunotherapy Palliative care

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How will my healthcare team decide what treatments to recommend for SCLC?

The treatment approach to small cell lung cancer is gradually changing as we learn more about the disease. Your healthcare team will mostly focus on the stage of the cancer to determine treatment recommendations. They will also review your other symptoms and health problems to make sure you can safely tolerate the treatments they offer. Often these different treatments are offered in combination. You and your healthcare team should discuss the risks and benefits of all the options presented to you.

Are there side effects of lung cancer treatments, how can I manage them?

Your healthcare team will discuss the specific side effects of each therapy you receive. Many of the side effects of systemic therapies depend on the type of therapy, the individual patient and the doses used. Be sure to talk to your healthcare providers about what to expect and medications that can help to alleviate your symptoms. Palliative care is an important approach for patients with lung cancer. The goal of palliative care is to improve your quality of life and help you and your family deal with the challenges of a serious illness. Palliative care can help minimize side effects and any related psychological, social, and spiritual problems you may be experiencing. For more detailed information on these topics please see helpful links in the 'Resources' section.

What about research centers or clinical trials?

Many of the treatments available for lung cancer patients today are the direct result of studies in which other people with cancer volunteered to take part in clinical trials. These research studies assess new treatments or new ways to deliver treatments. They allow healthcare providers to learn the very best treatment options for people and at times can benefit the people taking part in the studies. Often, many of the newest treatment options are available only by taking part in a clinical trial. Speak with your healthcare team about what research is being done to treat your type of cancer and whether you would be a good candidate to enroll in a clinical trial. You can search for clinical trials in your area through the National Cancer Institute website (<http://www.cancer.gov/clinicaltrials>).

How does stopping smoking improve lung cancer outcomes?

Stopping smoking can improve cancer outcomes at any stage of disease. Stopping smoking may help you heal better if you need surgery, cut down on side effects from systemic therapies like chemotherapy and

radiation, and allow these treatments to work better. Smoking cessation may also help you live longer, improve your quality of life, and lower the risk of cancer coming back or you getting a new cancer.

Speak to your healthcare provider about taking over-the-counter and/or prescription medications to help you stop smoking.

Helpful links to stop smoking:

<https://www.cancer.org/healthy/stay-away-from-tobacco/guide-quit-smoking/nicotine-replacement-therapy.html>

<https://quitnow.net/mve/quitnow>

OR call 1-800-QUITNOW (1-800-784-8669)

Healthcare Provider's Contact Number:

Authors: Yaron Gesthalter MD and Robert Smyth MD, MSC

Reviewers: Hasmeena Kathuria MD, Marianna Sockrider MD, DrPH

Resources:

American Thoracic Society

- www.thoracic.org/patients
 - Lung Cancer
 - Lung Cancer Staging
 - Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Treatment (Early)
 - Non-Small Cell Lung Cancer Treatment (Advanced)
 - Smoking Cessation and Cancer
 - Palliative Care for People with Respiratory Disease or Critical Illness

American Society of Clinical Oncology

- https://www.cancer.net/sites/cancer.net/files/asco_answers_guide_sclc.pdf

American Society for Radiation Oncology

- <https://www.rtanswers.org/Cancer-Types/Lung-Cancer>

Go2 Foundation

- <https://go2foundation.org/treatments-and-side-effects/side-effect-management/>

National Cancer Institute

- <https://www.cancer.gov/types/lung/patient/small-cell-lung-treatment-pdq>

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