

Mayo Clinic Minute: Understanding lung cancer

VIDEO	AUDIO
Jason	Lung cancer is the second most common cancer in the U.S., and the deadliest.
Jason	But there is promising news. Less cases of lung cancer and death occur every year, partly because more people are quitting smoking.
Karen Swanson, D.O. Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Mayo Clinic	"Ninety percent of lung cancers are related to cigarette smoking."
Jason	Early detection and treatment also help lower the numbers.
Dr. Swanson	"The holy grail, so to speak, is to find it at the earliest stage possible, where it can be surgically removed or treated with radiation or ablation for cure."
Jason	But that's often not the case because there usually aren't any early symptoms.
Dr. Swanson	"One of the problems with lung cancer is that by the time a patient presents and is diagnosed with lung cancer, 80% of the time the lung cancer is spread — meaning it's not localized disease."
Jason	Which is why the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recently lowered the lung cancer screening guidelines from age 55 and a 30 pack-year history to age 50 and a 20 pack-year history.
Dr. Swanson	"Some sort of smoking intervention to help the patient stop smoking is an essential part of any program because rather than diagnosing an early lung cancer, it's more important to stop the exposure."
Jason	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Jason Howland.