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lungcanceralliance.org

Women and Lung Cancer

If you think lung cancer just affects men, think again.

- ✓ Lung cancer is now the number one killer of women, claiming the lives of more women each year than breast cancer.
- ✓ Lung cancer is not declining among women, as it is among men.
- ✓ One in every 17 women will develop lung cancer in their lifetimes.
- ✓ It is estimated that over 80,000 women will get lung cancer this year—nearly half of all lung cancer cases.
- ✓ An estimated 72,000 American women will die from lung cancer this year, making up over 40 percent of all lung cancer deaths in this country.
- ✓ In one study, women with a long smoking history were nearly twice as likely to be diagnosed with as men smokers.

Although smoking is the major cause of lung cancer for everyone, more non-smoking women than non-smoking men get lung cancer.

- ✓ The death rate among non-smokers, however, is higher among men than among women.
- ✓ In a study of people with the most common type of lung cancer, nearly 80 percent if the non-smokers were women.
- ✓ Nearly 2 out of every 3 people who die from second hand smoke each year are women.
- ✓ For women who have been smokers, the risk for lung cancer remains even 20 years after quitting.
- ✓ Between 1930 and 1997, lung cancer death rates for American women rose 600 percent, largely because of the increase in the number of women who smoked.
- ✓ Women who smoke are 13 times more likely to die from lung cancer than women who have never smoked.
- ✓ Women who smoke have a harder time quitting than men who smoke.

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Lung cancer in women is a different disease than in men.

- ✓ Studies suggest estrogen may play a role in the development of lung cancer among women.
- ✓ Women with lung cancer usually live longer than men with the disease.

Older men aren't the only ones who develop lung cancer.

- ✓ Women make up over 40 percent of the lung cancer cases among people under 50 years old.

By the time lung cancer's symptoms appear, the disease is often in an advanced stage.

- ✓ As with men, the majority of new lung cancer cases in women will be diagnosed at a late stage.
- ✓ Only 15 percent of women and men with lung cancer survive more than 5 years, while 88 percent of women with breast cancer survive more than 5 years.

Race may play a role in lung cancer.

- ✓ African-American women develop lung cancer at about the same rate as white women, even though smoking rates are lower among African-American women.
- ✓ While African-American and white women have the highest rates of dying from lung cancer, Asian/Pacific Islander and Hispanic women have the lowest rates.
- ✓ African-American women who have never smoked have higher death rates than white women who have never smoked.

References available upon request

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