



**LUNG CANCER**  
FINDING YOUR BEST CARE





## FINDING THE BEST CARE FOR YOU

Do you wonder how to find the “best” lung cancer care? The answer to this question is unique to you.

We want you to find safe, up-to-date, high-quality care in a place where you feel comfortable. We also want you to be part of a healthcare team that listens to you, asks about your goals and answers your questions.

Finding the best care during your lung cancer journey is as individual as you are. Here are some questions to help determine what optimal care looks like for you.

- **Are you more comfortable getting your care at a large or small cancer center?**
- **Are you willing to travel? If so, how far?**
- **In what type of cancer center do you want to be treated?** *There are major cancer centers connected to universities that do lots of research, community cancer centers not connected to universities but close to where you live and other types in between.*
- **Do you have insurance?** *If so, are you limited in where you can get your care or what is covered?*  
*If not, what are your choices to find insurance or have your care covered?*

---

### Financial Assistance Resources

Ask to speak with the financial department, a nurse navigator or social worker at your cancer center. They will be able to direct you to local financial assistance programs.



## WHAT TOP CARE LOOKS LIKE

High-quality care for lung cancer patients includes the following services.

- A “multi-disciplinary team” made up of several types of doctors (including cancer testing and treatment specialists, lung specialists and surgeons), nurses and others who talk over your treatment choices together.
- Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals who know the latest lung cancer treatment options.
- Molecular testing (also called tumor or biomarker testing) to make sure you are getting the right kind of treatment for your lung cancer.\*
- Access to lung cancer clinical trials to expand your treatment options.
- Emotional support programs, like support groups.\*
- A patient or nurse navigator to help you through your journey.
- Financial advisors to help make sure you can afford the treatment and care that is right for you.
- Palliative care, which includes care for the symptoms of lung cancer and side effects of treatment.

*\*These services are sometimes offered outside of your local cancer center.*

## WHERE TO GO FOR TOP CARE

Some cancer centers take special steps to make sure they meet quality standards. We recommend you get your care (or a second opinion) at one of these centers. We keep a list of treatment facilities on our website at [www.lungcanceralliance.org](http://www.lungcanceralliance.org) that include:

**National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated centers:** The “gold standard” for cancer care, which are large, academic centers often found in cities.

**Commission on Cancer (CoC) accredited centers:** The CoC centers you will find at [www.lungcanceralliance.org](http://www.lungcanceralliance.org) have clearly labeled lung cancer-specific teams and services. These centers have been through another type of review process.

If you cannot get your care at one of these centers, here are some tips to find the best care:

### Find a center that cares about lung cancer by offering:

- Lung cancer clinical research studies.
- Lung cancer-specific treatment navigation.
- A lung cancer support group.

### Find a doctor who understands lung cancer:

- Visit [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net) and click “Find a Cancer Doctor.” Select “lung cancer” as the specialty you are looking for.
- If you cannot find a doctor on this list, don’t be afraid to ask your cancer doctor (called an oncologist) what they know about the latest lung cancer treatments.

### If you need surgery:

- Seek out a surgeon who does “general thoracic surgery.” Those who only do lung surgery have higher success rates than those who do heart surgery or other types of surgery in addition to lung cancer.
- Make sure the surgeon is certified by the American Board of Thoracic Surgery (ABTS).\*
- Ask your surgeon how long they have been doing surgery and how many lung cancer operations they do each year. More is better, but at least one a month is a minimum. Judge based on your comfort level.

*\*You can search the ABTS website at [www.abts.org](http://www.abts.org) or call them at 312-202-5900.*

---

## Consider a Second Opinion or Changing Centers

If you are unsure if your doctor or team is a good fit for you, we recommend changing centers or seeking out a second opinion.

Even if your team is a good fit, getting another opinion is helpful, especially if your doctor is not a lung cancer specialist.

## UNDERSTANDING PALLIATIVE CARE

Palliative care consists of services provided to a patient with the goal of preventing and/or treating the physical and emotional symptoms of a disease and side effects from treatment.

No matter the stage of your lung cancer or what type of center you go to, palliative care is an important part of your treatment. Many centers have special teams or specialists that focus on symptoms and side effect relief. Ask your team how you can find this care.

### Palliative care comes in lots of different forms, including:

- Management of pain medications to make sure your needs are met.
- Physical therapy to manage pain and muscle weakness.
- Emotional counseling to manage stress, anxiety, depression and other feelings that are common with a cancer diagnosis.

### Palliative care may help you:

- Feel better.
- Continue doing the things you love to do.
- Get the most out of your treatment.
- Cope better with your lung cancer.

---

### Search for Palliative Care

If your cancer center does not offer palliative care, visit [www.getpalliativecare.org/providers](http://www.getpalliativecare.org/providers) for a searchable directory.

**Palliative care is often misunderstood. Knowing the facts can help guide your decision making and lead you to the best care for you.**

**MYTH: *I have heard that palliative care is hospice and I don't want to "give up."***

**FACT:** Palliative care can (and should) be provided at any stage of the lung cancer process to prevent and treat troublesome symptoms and side effects during and after treatment.

**MYTH: *If I talk about my side effects, my doctor will stop my treatment.***

**FACT:** Treating your side effects can actually do the opposite. It will help you stay healthy, so you can continue taking your treatment.

**MYTH: *My side effects are normal, I just have to deal with them.***

**FACT:** Side effects can take a toll on your body and your daily life. You do not have to suffer!

**MYTH: *I am not going to talk about my side effects because there is no help for them anyway.***

**FACT:** The goal is to prevent side effects, if possible. If not, good treatment is available!

## LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF PALLIATIVE CARE

Research shows that people with advanced lung cancer live longer when palliative care is given early on and throughout treatment.

## ABOUT LUNG CANCER ALLIANCE

Lung Cancer Alliance serves and listens to those living with and at risk for lung cancer to reduce stigma, improve quality of life and increase survival. We empower our community by helping people navigate the paths of early detection, diagnosis and treatment. Insights allow us to improve care, amplify awareness, drive advocacy and lead research with the vision of tripling the number of survivors in the next decade.

For more information about our support services, research collaborations, awareness campaigns, advocacy efforts and early detection initiatives, please contact us.

### HELPLINE

1-800-298-2436

### MOLECULAR TESTING & CLINICAL TRIAL MATCHING

[lungmatch.org](http://lungmatch.org)

### EMAIL

[support@lungcanceralliance.org](mailto:support@lungcanceralliance.org)

### WEBSITE

[lungcanceralliance.org](http://lungcanceralliance.org)

### MAIL

1700 K Street NW, Suite 660  
Washington, DC 20006

---

This educational publication is made possible with a grant provided by:



**Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation**

Additional funding provided by Genentech.

---

Copyright © 2018, Lung Cancer Alliance. All rights reserved.

SAVING LIVES. ADVANCING RESEARCH. EMPOWERING PEOPLE.



**LUNG CANCER  
ALLIANCE**