



# YOUR TREATMENT GUIDE: UNDERSTANDING OPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS & QUESTIONS TO ASK

*Disclaimer: This guide is for general informational purposes only and is not medical advice. Treatment decisions should always be made with your healthcare team, who can provide recommendations based on your specific situation. If you have urgent or severe symptoms, seek immediate medical care.*

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*Clear Information. Compassionate Support.*

# A Comprehensive Resource for Lung Cancer Patients and Families

Facing treatment decisions after a lung cancer diagnosis can feel overwhelming. There are new terms to learn, unfamiliar procedures to prepare for, and choices that may impact your health, your daily life, and your long-term well-being. This guide is designed to serve as a clear, accessible resource that you can keep in a binder, save on your phone, or place somewhere easy to reference as questions arise.

Each treatment section explains:

- **What the treatment is**
- **Why it's used**
- **What you can expect during the process**
- **Common side effects**
- **Important questions to ask your care team**

While your treatment plan will be tailored to your specific type of lung cancer, understanding the purpose and process behind each option can help you navigate appointments with more confidence and clarity.

# SURGERY

## WHAT IT IS

Surgery involves physically removing the tumor from the lung, along with nearby lymph nodes if needed. The procedure varies depending on the size and location of the tumor and may include removing a small section of lung tissue, an entire lobe, or in rare cases, an entire lung.

## WHY IT'S USED

Surgery is most effective when the cancer is localized and has not spread. It may offer the chance for cure in early-stage disease, or may be combined with chemotherapy or radiation to reduce the risk of recurrence.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

You'll meet with your surgical and anesthesia teams beforehand to review the procedure, recovery process, and post-operative care.

During surgery, you'll be under general anesthesia. Afterward, a hospital stay is common to monitor your breathing, manage pain, and ensure the lung heals properly.

### Recovery often includes:

- Temporary soreness or chest discomfort
- Limited mobility for several days
- Breathing exercises or pulmonary rehabilitation
- A gradual return to normal activities over weeks

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Pain • Fatigue • Shortness of breath • Infection risk • Changes in lung capacity

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How much lung tissue will be removed?
- What is the expected recovery timeline?
- Will I need chemotherapy or radiation afterward?
- What limitations should I expect at home?

# CHEMOTHERAPY

## WHAT IT IS

Chemotherapy uses specialized medications to kill cancer cells throughout the body. These drugs travel through the bloodstream, which allows them to reach cancer cells that may have spread beyond the lungs.

## WHY IT'S USED

### Chemotherapy may be recommended to:

- Shrink tumors before surgery
- Kill remaining cancer cells after surgery
- Slow or stop cancer growth
- Increase the effectiveness of other treatments

It is often paired with radiation or immunotherapy depending on the cancer type.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Treatment is given in cycles—periods of active treatment followed by rest. Chemotherapy can be delivered:

- Through an IV
- Through a port
- Occasionally in pill form

Your care team will monitor your blood counts, organ function, and overall response with regular tests.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Fatigue • Nausea • Appetite changes • Hair loss • Low blood counts • Higher infection risk

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How often will I receive treatment?
- What side effects are most likely for my regimen?
- How will we measure progress?
- What medications can prevent or reduce side effects?

# RADIATION THERAPY

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## WHAT IT IS

Radiation therapy uses focused, high-energy beams to destroy cancer cells or prevent them from multiplying. Unlike chemotherapy, it treats a specific area rather than the whole body.

## WHY IT'S USED

### Radiation may be recommended to:

- Shrink tumors
- Eliminate cancer cells left after surgery
- Treat cancers that cannot be surgically removed
- Relieve symptoms like pain, coughing, or breathing difficulty

## WHAT TO EXPECT

You will undergo a mapping session (called simulation) so the radiation team can precisely target the treatment area.

Daily sessions typically last 10–20 minutes over several weeks. You won't feel the radiation, and it's safe to be around others afterward.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Fatigue • Skin changes • Sore throat • Cough • Difficulty swallowing • Lung inflammation

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- How many sessions will I need?
- What short- and long-term side effects should I expect?
- How might radiation impact my lung function?
- What symptoms require immediate reporting?

# IMMUNOTHERAPY

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## WHAT IT IS

Immunotherapy activates or strengthens your immune system so it can more effectively detect and attack cancer cells. It works best for certain lung cancers with specific biomarkers.

## WHY IT'S USED

**Your doctor may recommend immunotherapy if:**

- Cancer has spread or returned
- Your tumor has certain genetic or protein markers
- Other treatments are less effective or not well tolerated

Immunotherapy is often used for longer-term disease control.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

Treatment is typically administered by IV every few weeks. While immunotherapy generally has fewer side effects than chemotherapy, your care team will closely monitor you for immune-related reactions.

## POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

Fatigue • Skin rash • Diarrhea • Cough • Organ inflammation (lungs, liver, thyroid)

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

- Am I a candidate based on my cancer type?
- What markers or tests determine eligibility?
- How will we evaluate my response?
- What symptoms require immediate attention?

# MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

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Your treatment journey may involve one therapy or several working together. Every step is tailored to your diagnosis, overall health, and personal goals. It's normal to feel uncertain or have new questions as treatment progresses—these conversations matter, and your care team is there to support you.

Keeping a copy of this guide nearby can help you stay informed and prepared throughout your care. Understanding your treatment options empowers you to participate actively in decisions, recognize changes early, and communicate effectively with your oncology team.