

### Are there different types of lung cancer?

Yes, there are in fact quite a few different types of lung cancer but in general the disease is split into two main categories:

- Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC).
- Small cell lung cancer (SCLC).

Around 85 of every 100 people with lung cancer have non-small cell making it the most common group, and around 15 of every 100 people with lung cancer have small cell.

Non-small cell lung cancer can be further sub-divided, as there are also different types of non-small lung cancer. Each one is made up of a different type of abnormal cell.

### What are the different types of non-small cell lung cancer?

**Adenocarcinoma** - this is a little more common in women and is more commonly seen in the outer parts of the lung. There is a rarer form where an excess of sputum is produced.

**Large cell carcinoma** - this type of lung cancer is generally more aggressive and often arises in the larger air passages. It has a tendency to spread outside the lung at an earlier stage.

**Squamous carcinoma** - this is the commonest type of lung cancer in the UK and often forms in the larger, more central airways.

All types of NSCLC are potentially suitable for surgery if they are diagnosed at an early enough stage.

### What is small cell lung cancer?

This type of lung cancer is made up of small round cells that form fleshy lumps and usually start in the larger airways. These cells reproduce and grow very quickly. It may spread to the lymph nodes and/or other organs in the body.

Small cell lung cancer is generally more responsive to chemotherapy treatment than other treatments. However radiotherapy may also be used. In rare cases this type of lung cancer can be surgically removed. Small cell lung cancer often reoccurs within a short space of time, so it is usual for you to attend regular check-ups to ensure any reoccurrence is found quickly.



### Can other cancers affect the lung?

Yes, there is a variety but most of them are rare. Mesothelioma, pancoast and carcinoid tumours are three of the more common types, and are detailed below.

**Mesothelioma:** It is closely associated with a history of asbestos exposure either through work or contact with a person in the asbestos industry. It may take 35-40 years from the date of first exposure for the cancer to develop. For more information about lung cancer and working conditions see our Living with lung cancer booklet—see [www.roycastle.org/ayqpack](http://www.roycastle.org/ayqpack)

The cancer cells are usually positioned in the lining of the lung and often produce fluid. This may require draining from time to time, which can improve breathing. There has been great debate as to the most effective treatments for this type of cancer. It is worth discussing your options with your cancer doctor or lung cancer nurse specialist. It may be that you are offered a treatment that is still under clinical trial.

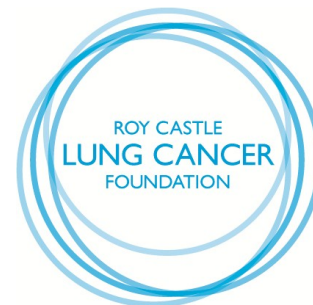
Please note that financial compensation from the government may be available if lung damage from exposure to asbestos is proven. For more information about lung cancer and working conditions see our *Living with lung cancer* booklet — see [www.roycastle.org/ayqpack](http://www.roycastle.org/ayqpack)

**Pancoast Tumour:** This rare tumour grows at the top of the lung. Treatment is usually the same as NSCLC and will depend on where the tumour is, the size of it and whether it has spread to other parts of the body.

**Carcinoid Tumour:** This is a rare tumour of the lung which is generally less aggressive than other types. The tumour develops from a special type of cells in the lung called neuroendocrine cells. Many carcinoid tumours can be cured by surgery but some are more aggressive and can spread to other parts of the body and may require treatment with chemotherapy.

Other tumours are so rare that current information is best given by your doctor or lung cancer nurse specialist. Below are some further unusual types of lung cancer:

- Hamartoma.
- Lymphoma.
- Sarcoma.
- Bronchial gland tumours.
- Pleural fibroma.



### Is it an advantage to know what type of lung cancer I have?

Yes, the most effective and appropriate treatment for you will vary depending on what type (pathology) of lung cancer you have, as different types of lung cancer respond to different treatments.

*“Learning all I could about the type of cancer my husband has, helped me understand things much better and grab a little bit of control in my life.”*

Gill

### Does lung cancer spread?

Although lung cancer frequently develops in a single area on the lung, it can also spread to other areas of the body. This is called metastasis or metastatic disease. It is usual for the lymph nodes near the centre of the chest to be affected first and from there the cancer can spread throughout the body's circulation. The most common places of spread are the lymph nodes, bones (including the spine), liver, adrenal glands, skin and the brain. It is important to find out if any spread is present at diagnosis as this will help in deciding which treatment is best for you.

The following symptoms are sometimes associated with lung cancer metastasis. If you have any concern about any symptoms, pain or changes following your diagnosis talk to your hospital doctor or lung cancer nurse specialist. Try to remember that many aches and pains will be nothing to do with your cancer.

- Frequent headaches.
- Blurring of vision.
- Weakness/numbness in the legs.
- Sickness (especially in morning).
- Lumps in the neck or on the skin.
- Pain in the bones, for example, ribs, shoulder, arms or legs.
- Breathlessness resulting from fluid around the lung (pleural effusion).

### GIVING HELP AND HOPE

The charity has two aims:

**Supporting people living with lung cancer** - Working closely with lung cancer nurses, we provide information, run lung cancer support groups and offer telephone and online support. Our patient grants offer some financial help to people affected by lung cancer.

**Saving lives** - We fund lung cancer research, campaign for better treatment and care for people who have lung cancer, and raise awareness of the importance of early diagnosis. Our lung cancer prevention work helps people to quit smoking and encourages young people not to start smoking.

**Call us on 0333 323 7200 (option 2)**

This information has been taken from the following source:  
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