



Lung Cancer Surgery

About surgery



- Not all people with lung cancer can have it removed by surgery.
- Surgery removes part of or all of the lung.

Lung cancer surgery is an option for some patients depending on:

- What type of lung cancer you have
- Where your lung cancer is
- The stage of your lung cancer
- What other health problems you have.

To try to cure lung cancer with the surgery, a surgeon will remove the tumour and some surrounding lung tissue. Removing the tumour with lung cancer surgery is considered the best option when the cancer is on one area of the lung and it hasn't spread. This often includes early stage non-small cell lung cancers and carcinoid tumours.

Surgery may be the first step in lung cancer treatment or it may follow other treatments. Surgeons will use the following operations to treat lung cancer:

Lung Cancer Surgical Procedures



Wedge Resection

A wedge resection is the removal of a small, wedge-shaped part of the lung tissue surrounding the cancerous tumour.

Lobectomy

Lobectomy is the removing (resecting) the lobe (section) of the lung affected by lung cancer. This is the most common lung cancer surgery. A bilobectomy is the removal of two lobes in the same lung. The right lung has three lobes; the left lung has two lobes.

Pneumonectomy

Pneumonectomy is the removal of all the lung affected by cancer. This is usually done if the cancer cannot be fully removed with the lobectomy. A surgeon may also remove a lung if your treatment team believes that cancer may have spread throughout the left or right lung or if the cancer tumour is in the middle area of your lungs.

A lung cancer surgery called a sleeve resection is also sometimes done. A sleeve resection starts with the removal of lung cancer tumours. These tumours can be in the main airway (bronchus), part of the pulmonary artery (artery to the lung) or the lobe. The ends of the bronchus are rejoined and any good lobes are rejoined to the bronchus.

Each type of lung cancer treatment option has possible side effects. It is important to know the possible side effects and ways to manage these before beginning lung cancer treatment.)



Possible lung cancer surgery side effects



- Pain
- Possible problems after and caused by the lung cancer surgery
- Breathlessness
- [Learn how to cope with side effects.](#)

Talk about what worries you, possible side effects and any effects that you experience with your doctor.

[Click here to download a list of Questions To Ask.](#)

Related content

[American Lung Association \(2016\) "What Are The Symptoms of Lung Cancer?"](#)

[European Lung Foundation \(2016\) "Lung Cancer"](#)

[Lung Foundation Australia \(2012\) "Better Living with Lung Cancer: A Patient Guide"](#)

About Lung Foundation New Zealand

Lung Foundation New Zealand is a non-government organisation dedicated to promoting healthy lungs and early detection of lung disease (including lung cancer, New Zealand's biggest cancer killer). The Lung Foundation is devoted to supporting people affected by lung disease and provides a voice for patients and their families.

Lung Foundation New Zealand advocates on a range of issues, including access to more effective funded treatments, an increase in research funding and a commitment to making Aotearoa a smoke free nation by 2025.

Support us

Lung Foundation New Zealand is an independent organisation and is reliant on support from fundraising events, donations and bequests. This resource has been produced as the result of generous support provided by members of the public.

If you or a member of your family would like to support our work we would love to hear from you. Together we can save lives by increasing awareness about lung health and early detection of lung disease. Please visit our website www.lungfoundation.org.nz or contact Philip Hope, CEO on (+64) 021 959 450 or philip.hope@lungfoundation.org.nz

Connect with us on Facebook - fb.me/LungFoundationNZ

Expert Review Policy: Our information was checked for accuracy and clarity by cancer specialists. This resource has been approved by Medical Director & Associate Professor of Oncology, Chris Atkinson of Christchurch; assisted by Dr Greg Frazer, Respiratory Physician, Christchurch Hospital; Catherine Smith, Clinical Nurse Specialist - Lung Cancer, Christchurch Hospital; and Anne Fraser, Oncology Nurse Practitioner, Auckland City Hospital. Lung Foundation New Zealand writes in plain English. We review our information every two years so it is kept up to date.

Thanks to the American Lung Association and the European Lung Foundation for allowing us to adapt their resources for our New Zealand readers. This information sheet is one in a series produced by Lung Foundation New Zealand on lung disease, its treatment and related issues and is correct at time of print. It is designed to be used as a guide only; it is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical treatment. Please consult your family doctor or specialist if you have further questions relating to this information.