



## Your Lung Cancer Care Team

### Take action



Keep all of your lung cancer care team's contact information in one place. Before you leave an appointment, find out whom you should contact and how you should contact them if you have any questions.

### Key points



- Each member of your lung cancer care team has a different role.
- You should feel comfortable with each person on your team. You will be asking them many questions!
- Your lung cancer care team might have professionals trained in a special area. Everyone should work together to give you the best care possible.

Each member of your lung cancer care team has a specific role in your lung cancer treatment and healing. This includes lung cancer education and support.

Your care team may include the members below, although there may be other people, including oncology nurses, oncologists, rehabilitation specialists, spiritual care providers, dietitians, nurse practitioners.

Your care team is not limited to these people. During your cancer journey, many others will care for you. Some of these may include:

- **GP (General Practitioner):** The lead practitioner (doctor) based in the community who provides day to day healthcare for patients (you) and coordinates other specialist care by referral.
- **Respiratory physician:** Doctor who specialises in lung illnesses, including cancer and will often be the first doctor, other than your GP that you see in your cancer journey.
- **Chest surgeon:** Surgeon specialising in removing lung cancers, or helping with the diagnosis by taking tissue (sample).
- **Pathologist:** Doctor who assesses the biopsy and advises what type of cancer you have and whether it has been removed completely.
- **Radiologist:** Doctor specialising in imaging techniques to assess whether the cancer is contained to the lung or has spread. These doctors may also use imaging to guide where to take the biopsy tissue from.
- **Medical oncologists:** Cancer specialists who treat patients with drugs.
- **Radiation oncologists:** Cancer specialists who use radiation to treat cancer.
- **Radiation technician:** A technician who prepares patients for radiation treatment and runs the radiation equipment.
- **Oncology nurses:** Nurses that give cancer drugs (chemotherapy) and care for people with cancer.
- **District nurses:** Registered nurses based in the community who provide specialist treatment to patients in their own home.
- **Physiotherapist, occupational therapist and speech therapist:** These people can help you reduce your lung cancer symptoms and treatment side effects. They will teach you ways that will help you improve your quality of life.



### Key points (cont.)

- **Pharmacist/chemist:** A person trained to prepare and provide your medications. Your pharmacist can be a great resource and can answer many of your questions about lung cancer medications and side effects.
- **Palliative care team:** Specialists including; doctors, nurses, dietitian etc. who focus on the management of your pain, side effects and quality of life and can see you in your own home.
- **Psychologist:** Specialists that can help you cope with the emotional aspects of lung cancer.
- **Dietitian or nutritionist:** A specialist trained to advise people on what to eat to meet their dietary needs.
- **Spiritual leader or priest:** You may have your own resource or you can ask your care team or treatment facility to help connect you with spiritual or religious support.

### Multidisciplinary team

All patients with a new diagnosis of lung cancer, or if lung cancer might be the reason for symptoms will be discussed by a Multidisciplinary Team which may include all of the lung cancer care team described above. This allows the right treatment for the right patient at the right time to be decided on.

### A second opinion

You can seek a second opinion or switch doctors. It is important that you feel comfortable with your treatment team. Don't worry about upsetting your doctor asking for a second opinion. It is common for patients to explore all of their lung cancer treatment options. A good doctor will respect your need for information and will help you make the best choices.

Your family, friends, neighbours, work mates and others can be very important members of your care "team." It is good to ask for and receive support from others. Learn more about getting support.

### 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](http://www.lungfoundation.org.nz) or contact Philip Hope, CEO on (+64) 021 959 450 or [philip.hope@lungfoundation.org.nz](mailto:philip.hope@lungfoundation.org.nz)

**Connect with us on Facebook - [fb.me/LungFoundationNZ](https://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.*