

Lung Cancer Awareness

What You Don't Know



A recent survey taken by the American Cancer Society revealed some common misconceptions about the personal risk of cancer.

Highlights from the survey:

- Nearly 4 out of 10 people incorrectly believed that living in a polluted city was a greater risk for lung cancer than smoking a pack of cigarettes a day, while 19% were not sure if the statement was true or false.
- 15% incorrectly believed that people who smoke low-tar cigarettes were less likely to die of lung cancer than people who smoked regular cigarettes, and 11% weren't sure if this was true.

What Is Lung Cancer?

Although lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in the

U.S. in both men and women, it is also one of the most preventable kinds of cancer. At least four out of five cases are associated with cigarette smoking, and the cause-and-effect relationship has been extensively documented.

During the 1920s, large numbers of men began to smoke cigarettes, presumably in response to increased advertising. Twenty years later, the frequency of lung cancer in men climbed sharply. In the 1940s, significantly more women became smokers. Twenty years later, there was a similar dramatic increase in lung cancer among women.

About 170,000 people in the U.S. are diagnosed with lung cancer each year, most between the ages of 40 and 70. Only 1% of lung cancer patients are younger than 30, and only 10% are older than 70. The number of people that sur-

vive five years or more is increasing and now stands at about 15%. An individual cancer sufferer's prognosis will vary according to the type of lung cancer involved, the person's overall health, and the status of the cancer at the time of diagnosis.

What Causes It?

Most lung cancer is caused by smoking and as with any cancer, each person's genetic pattern influences susceptibility. The fact that lung cancer runs in some families suggests that a predisposition can be inherited. Additionally, certain genetic traits have been identified that make some people more susceptible than others to cancer-causing substances like those found in tobacco smoke.

Secondhand tobacco smoke can also cause lung cancer, giving

(Over)



Photo: Courtesy of the American Lung Association of Colorado

Lung Cancer (Continued)

nonsmokers who live or work with smokers a somewhat higher lung cancer risk than those in smoke-free environments.

Cancer-causing substances other than those found in tobacco or tobacco smoke can also cause lung cancer if inhaled in quantity over time.

Workers who are exposed on a daily basis to asbestos, silica, mineral dusts, coal dust, arsenic, or the radioactive gas radon are much more likely than the average person to develop lung cancer, especially if they are smokers.

Lung tissue that has been scarred by disease or infection, such as scleroderma or tuberculosis, is more susceptible to tumor growth. Because of a high frequency of lung cancer among people who eat large amounts of fat and cholesterol, some researchers speculate that diet may also influence lung cancer risk.

Studies show that people who stop smoking and never start again and have a diet rich in fruit, and possibly vegetables, may help lower their risk of developing lung cancer.

Sources: www.webmd.com.



County Health Pool Renewal Meeting

The County Health Pool 2008 renewal meeting held on September 13, 2007 at the CTSI offices was a success.

Some of the highlights are as follows:

- For the second year in a row, there was an overall net increase of only 6% for medical and prescription benefits compared to the national rate increase of between 9-11%. There are no changes or rate increases to the life insurance, dental or vision benefits.
- A High Deductible Health Plan (HDHP) that is compatible with a Health Savings Account (HSA) was made available for 2008 with a \$2,500 single deductible and a \$5,000 family deductible.

CHP has proven to be a very successful and desirable option for local governments even with the minimum increases of 0-6% over the past several years. The growth in this program only confirms the continual interest from multiple local governments such as counties, cities, special districts and school districts.

Benefits Corner

Announcement to all County Health Pool Members

There have been several inquiries regarding the coverage for the LifeLine Screening. These preventative screenings are not a covered benefit through the County Health Pool. For a list of preventative services that are covered by the County Health Pool please refer to the Plan Document.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your Benefits Administrator.