

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT SMALL CELL LUNG CANCER (SCLC)



MYTH
There's no treatment for SCLC.



FACT

While there's no cure, there are a variety of treatment options including surgery, chemotherapy, radiation therapy and medicines that stimulate the body's immune system to fight the cancer.¹

MYTH
SCLC does not spread beyond the lungs.



FACT

A cancer is always named after the part of the body it started in, meaning SCLC always starts within the lungs. However, lung cancers – including SCLC – may spread to other parts of the body such as the brain, liver or bone.²

MYTH
I'm too young to have lung cancer.



FACT

The average age of people diagnosed with lung cancer is around 70. However, a small number of people diagnosed with SCLC may be younger than 45.³

MYTH
Smoking cigarettes is the only risk factor for SCLC.



FACT

Smoking is the most common risk factor for SCLC; however it is not the only one. Other risk factors include exposure to secondhand smoke, asbestos, some inhaled chemicals, radiation or air pollution. A family history of lung cancer can also come into play.⁴

MYTH
Former smokers cannot develop SCLC.



FACT

Those who have quit smoking can still develop lung cancer, but the risk decreases 30% to 60% for those who have quit smoking for 10 or more years.⁵

References

1. National Cancer Institute. Small cell lung cancer treatment (PDQ®) – patient version. https://www.cancer.gov/types/lung/patient/small-cell-lung-treatment-pdq#_92. Updated May 21, 2020. Accessed June 8, 2020.
2. Cancer Treatment Centers of America. Metastatic lung cancer. <https://www.cancercenter.com/cancer-types/lung-cancer/types/metastatic-lung-cancer>. Updated November 5, 2020. Accessed March 11, 2021.
3. American Cancer Society. Key statistics for lung cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/lung-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>. Updated January 12, 2021. Accessed March 11, 2021.
4. American Cancer Society. Small cell lung cancer causes, risk factors, and prevention. <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8709.00.pdf>. Updated May 16, 2016. Accessed March 11, 2021.
5. National Cancer Institute. Lung cancer prevention (patient version). <https://www.cancer.gov/types/lung/patient/lung-prevention-pdq>. Updated March 27, 2020. Accessed March 11, 2021.