

# Lung Cancer

Eighteen years ago, Jo-Ann Lautman was diagnosed with breast cancer. As she prepared herself to fight the cancer, her doctors came back with more bad news: Jo-Ann also had lung cancer.

*"When I found out I had lung cancer, I was terrified because of my family history. My father died at 62 from lung cancer. My brother died at 57 from lung cancer. And maybe it was my turn."*-Jo-Ann, Patient

While anyone can get lung cancer, smoking is the biggest risk. Another is secondhand smoke that is, exposure to smoke from other people. Jo-Ann not only smoked herself, but also lived with a smoker.

*"I smoked occasionally until I was about 30, but my husband on the other hand, smoked very heavily and in the house."*-Jo-Ann, Patient

Doctors group lung cancers into types. There are two main types, based on how the cancer cells look under a microscope. Most lung cancers are non-small cell. Often, they grow from cells lining the alveoli, or air sacs. In some cases, they start in the airways or other parts of the lungs. A less common type, known as small cell cancer, usually begins in tubes called bronchi, and spreads more quickly than non-small cell cancer.

*"Just a little bit of inflammation here and some scar."*

Based on whether non-small cell lung cancer has spread and if so, how far, doctors assign it a number called a stage. Stage 0 means there are abnormal cells in the lungs that could be cancer. Stage 1 is only in the lung. Stage 2 may have spread to the lymph nodes—small glands that are part of the immune system. Stage 3 is in the lymph nodes. It may also have spread to other parts of the chest. And stage 4 cancer has spread to other organs, like the brain, liver, kidney, or bone.

Small cell lung cancer has only two stages. Limited stage cancer is in one part of the chest. Extensive stage cancer has spread to other parts of the body. Your doctor will determine the right treatment for you based on your type of lung cancer and its stage.

*"Surgery is a common treatment for early stage non-small cell lung cancer because it's confined to the lung."*  
Dr. Osita Onugha, MD, Thoracic Surgeon

That was Jo-Ann's diagnosis.

# Lung Cancer

*"There I was ready to have breast cancer surgery, only to find out that I had lung cancer and five days later, I had a lobe of my lung removed for cancer."-Jo-Ann, Patient*

The lungs are divided into sections called lobes. There are three lobes in the right lung and two in the left. Surgery can involve removing part of a lobe, an entire lobe, a whole lung, or part of a large airway. Getting radiation before surgery can shrink the tumor and make it easier to remove. Radiation uses high-energy X-rays to kill cancer cells. You can also get it after surgery to destroy any cancer cells that were left behind. Chemotherapy uses drugs to kill cancer all over your body.

*"You might get chemotherapy if you have small cell lung cancer that has spread to other organs. It's also sometimes used before or after surgery, or with radiation, to help these treatments work better against your cancer."- Dr. Osita Onugha, MD, Thoracic Surgeon*

Other treatment options include targeted therapy, which targets substances that help cancer cells grow; and Immunotherapy, which revs up your body's immune system to fight the cancer. Now a long-time cancer survivor, Jo-Ann shares messages of hope with others at the grief support center she founded.

*"Throughout this entire cancer journey, I have learned to have a positive attitude, to have trust in myself, and in my doctors. I may have lost parts of my lungs, but I've gained a lot of strength in the process."-Jo-Ann, Patient*