

# Most Americans don't know about lung cancer screening, survey shows

August 1 2024, by Ernie Mundell

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Credit: Anna Tarazevich from Pexels

People who've had a history of smoking can get a [lung cancer](#) spotted early—when it's most treatable—through annual CT screening.

Unfortunately, most Americans polled in a new survey didn't know this potentially lifesaving screen exists.

"The survey shows that we have a significant amount of work to do in increasing awareness about [lung cancer](#) screening," said Harold Wimmer. He's president and CEO of the American Lung Association (ALA), which conducted the 2024 Lung Health Barometer survey.

Getting a tumor detected via an annual CT lung scan raises the odds of five-year survival from stage 1 to 4 lung cancer by 63%, according to the [ALA](#).

Under current [American Cancer Society](#) guidelines, yearly lung cancer screening with a low-dose CT scan is currently recommended for all people aged 50 to 80 who smoke or used to smoke, and who have at least a 20 pack-year history of smoking (meaning a pack of cigarettes smoked per day for 20 years).

The new ALA survey canvassed 4,000 people across the United States about their knowledge of lung health and lung cancer.

Only 38% of respondents knew that CT scans were now an available [screening](#) option for folks at high risk for lung cancer.

Still, even that number is an increase from prior years, Wimmer noted.

"Compared to our 2022 Lung Health Barometer, we saw a 27% increase in awareness of [lung cancer screening](#)," he said in an ALA news release.

In other findings:

- Only about a quarter (28%) of respondents knew that lung cancer is still America's leading cancer killer. Only 10% thought it was a

cancer likely to affect women (women are often affected).

- Most (73%) of respondents had never spoken to their doctor about their risk of lung cancer, and only 42% were concerned they might get the disease. According to the [ACS](#), about one in every five lung cancers occur in people who have never smoked.
- Seven out of 10 of those surveyed were hopeful that lung cancer treatments and outcomes have improved over the past decade. However, only 15% were aware that survival has increased dramatically—by over 50% in the past 10 years.

"The American Lung Association's new [survey](#) provides a critical look at public awareness and attitudes regarding lung cancer, which is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S.," Wimmer said.

**More information:** Find out more about lung cancer screening guidelines from another respected group, the [U.S. Preventive Services Task Force](#).

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