

Sigh of Relief

Low-dose CT lung cancer screenings find the disease early

Lung cancer is by far the deadliest of all cancers. According to the American Cancer Society, it kills more people per year than breast, colon and prostate cancers combined. This is partly because a safe, effective screening for the disease was not available. Until now. New screening technology, which is a simple computed tomography (CT) scan of the chest, detects lung cancer much earlier, when survival rates are higher.

“Traditionally, lung cancer wasn’t diagnosed until people displayed symptoms such as an uncontrollable cough, unexplained weight loss and coughing up blood,” says Kenyon M. Meadows, M.D., board-certified radiation oncologist. “By the time symptoms are present, the disease is already in its late stages, making it harder to cure.”

With early detection, treatment can cure over 70 percent of stage 1 lung cancers. The newly detected lung tumor is biopsied and then surgically removed, or irradiated using the CyberKnife® Robotic Radiosurgery System. A minimally invasive procedure, CyberKnife delivers high doses of radiation directly to the tumor. Patients typically undergo three to five short outpatient radiation treatments with minimal side effects.

“CyberKnife allows us to safely and effectively treat early stage lung cancer, even in those patients who cannot tolerate lung surgery due to poor medical conditions,” says Timothy A. Jamieson, M.D., Ph.D., board-certified radiation oncologist and medical director of the Health System Cancer Care Centers. “Even patients with greatly diminished lung function can safely benefit from CyberKnife with a high expectation for cure without worsening lung problems.”

Southeast Georgia Health System has been designated as a lung cancer screening center by the American College of Radiology. Fortunately for patients, the screening is now covered by most insurance companies. ●



Kenyon M. Meadows, M.D.



Who Should Be Screened?

Smoking causes nearly 90 percent of lung cancer deaths, according to the American Lung Association. If you smoke or previously smoked, you may qualify for a lung cancer screening. Recommended candidates include individuals ages 55 to 74 who currently smoke or previously smoked at least one pack a day for 30 years, two packs a day for 15 years or three packs a day for 10 years. If you fit in this category, talk to your doctor about obtaining a referral for a lung cancer screening today.

ARE YOU AT RISK? GET SCREENED!

To learn more about lung cancer screenings, visit sghs.org/cancer. To find a physician, call **855-ASK-SGHS (855-275-7447)**.

