

Large print version



Dr Nick Davies

Been coughing for 3 weeks?

Tell your doctor.



go.nhs.wales/lungcancer

NHS Wales Be Clear on Cancer

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Be Clear on Cancer

Let's be clear about lung cancer

Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in Wales.

There are around 2,400 new cases in Wales every year. It kills more men and women than any other form of cancer.

Lung cancer can affect people of all ages, however, it starts to get more common after the age of 50. Although it is more common in smokers around one in eight people with lung cancer never smoked.

Finding lung cancer early improves the chances of successful treatment.

So if you have a cough for three weeks or more, it's worth contacting your GP to be on the safe side.

Let's be clear about how to spot it

You need to tell a doctor straight away if you have been coughing for the past three weeks or more. Some of the other symptoms of lung cancer include:

- A cough that has got worse or changes
- Repeated chest infections
- Coughing up blood
- Breathlessness
- Feeling more tired than usual for some time
- Losing weight for no obvious reason
- An ache or pain in your chest or shoulder that has lasted some time.

If you notice any of these symptoms, contact your doctor right away.

Let's be clear about how important it is to tell your doctor

Detecting lung cancer early makes it easier to treat, so telling your doctor quickly may save your life. It's probably nothing serious but it could also be a sign of something else that needs treatment.

So, don't ignore the symptoms or put off telling your doctor. It can make the world of difference and you won't be wasting anyone's time.

And if you know anyone who has any of these symptoms, insist they tell their doctor. Again, it's probably nothing serious, but they should get it checked out.

Let's be clear about telling your doctor

Your doctor will ask you a few questions, like the ones that follow, and may suggest a chest x-ray. This is standard procedure and nothing to worry about. Taking an x-ray is quick and simple and doesn't require an overnight hospital stay.

Your doctor might ask you some of these questions:

- How long have you had a cough?
- Has your cough changed over time?
- Have you coughed up any blood?
- Have you had any chest infections recently?
- Have you been short of breath? For how long?
- Has your shortness of breath changed over time?
- Have you lost any weight?
- Have you had a pain in your chest or shoulder?

- Has this pain changed over time?

It may help to make a note of your symptoms and how you feel, so you don't forget anything when telling your doctor.

Let's be clear about reducing your risk of cancer

You can reduce the risk with lifestyles changes, including;

Stop smoking

Smoking increases the risk of many cancers. If you smoke, the best thing you can do for your health is to quit. There's plenty of support and help from the NHS. Visit **stopsmokingwales.com** or call freephone **0800 085 2219**.

Look after yourself

Being overweight or obese can increase your risk of some cancers. Try to maintain a healthy weight and keep active. Swimming, cycling, dancing, walking – the more you do, the better. Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet too, with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

Cut down on alcohol

Drinking too much alcohol can lead to a number of health problems and is linked with some cancers. By drinking less, you'll reduce your health risks.

Let's be clear about how telling your doctor early could save your life

Here are some real life stories:

Jane Holmes says:

“I was diagnosed with lung cancer in June 2014. I was living a healthy lifestyle, running regularly, eating well and didn't smoke. As you can imagine, the diagnosis and prognosis came as a shock.

I have since had chemotherapy, radiotherapy and then became eligible for surgery. I had surgery in June 2015 and four months later completed the Snowdonia marathon! I have had clear scans since surgery and have been on several lovely holidays and have entered for the marathon again this year!

I am being monitored regularly but am delighted to be doing so well.”

Graham Thomas says:

“So here I was, seven years down the line, after stopping smoking following 50 years of the habit. I was bullet proof, feeling good and looking forward to the rest of my life following retirement. In February 2014, with no warning, I suffered a bout of pneumonia and following treatment to clear that I was diagnosed with lung cancer. Two years after treatment I now feel good, and so people tell me, look well. Never think ‘it won't happen to me’, never think ‘I am afraid to seek help’. There are wonderful people who give amazing treatments and care out there. You won't be alone, you go through it together.”

Unclear on anything?

Visit **go.nhs.wales/lungcancer**

This leaflet is available in this and other formats from the website.

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UK

Ffônio'n unig sydd angen
0808 808 1010
Ffônïwch ni, 365 diwrnod y flwyddyn



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