

## HKSH Respiratory Medicine Centre

### Happy Valley

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### Service Hours

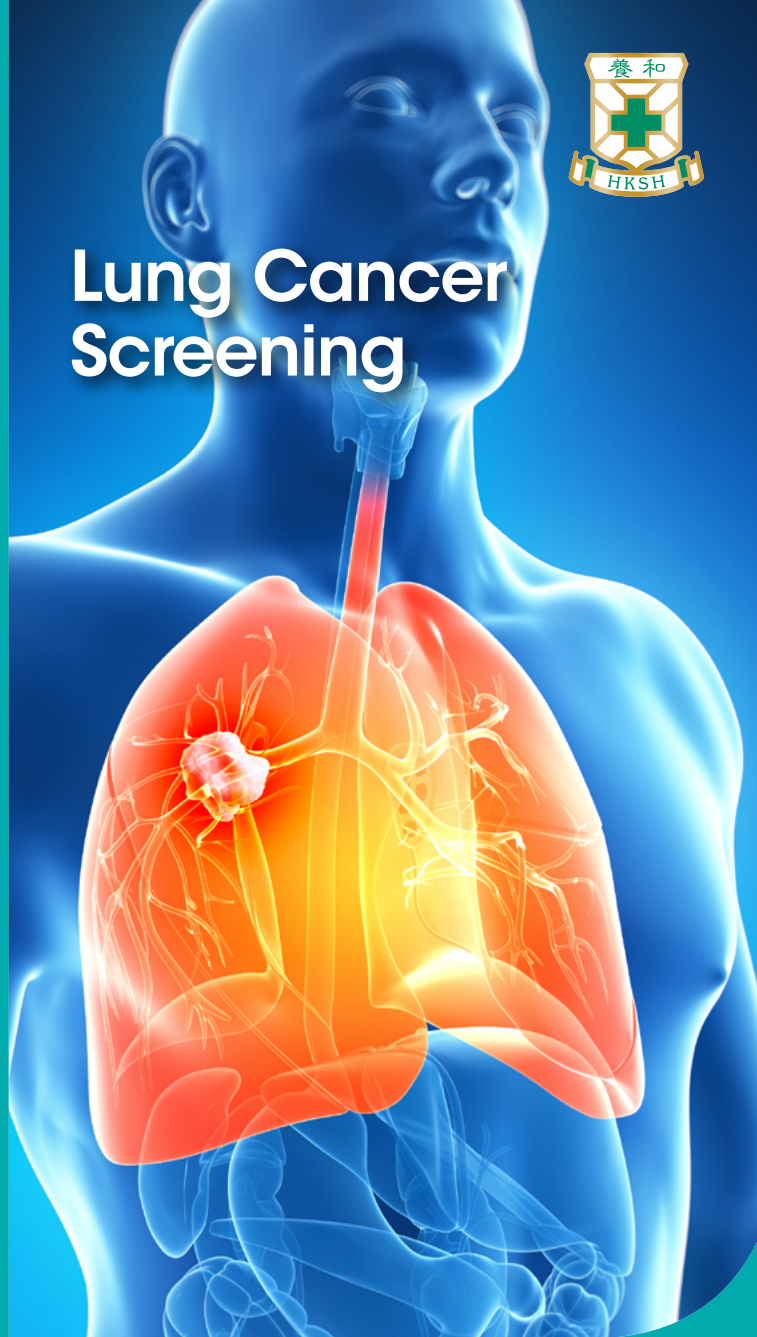
Monday to Friday: 9:00 am – 5:00 pm  
Saturday: 9:00 am – 1:00 pm  
Closed on Sundays and Public Holidays  
Consultation by Appointment



For enquiries and appointments,  
please contact us



# Lung Cancer Screening



## What is lung cancer screening?

Lung cancer screening is a way in which doctors check for signs in the asymptomatic early-stage lung cancer patients. Although screening is not likely to be helpful for all current and past smokers, doctors do think it might help prevent cancer deaths in some people at high risk.

Researches have been studying chest X-rays and low-dose CT scans (CT stands for Computed Tomography) to see if they are good screening tools. A low-dose CT scan uses less radiation than a normal CT scan and shows more detailed images of the lungs than a standard X-ray. It turns out that X-rays do not work for screening. Low-dose CT scan, on the other hand, has been shown to be a helpful screening tool for some people at high risk of lung cancer.

The goal of lung cancer screening is to detect lung cancer at a very early stage, before it has a chance to grow, spread or cause problems. Studies found that high risk population who were screened with low-dose CT scans, they were less likely to die of lung cancer. Even so, experts are not yet ready to recommend low-dose CT scans for all heavy smokers as it is unclear whether having screening done outside of a research project – in the ‘real world’ – would work as well. Besides, the screening comes with certain risks and the need for more investigations if a person has an abnormal screening test.

The best way to prevent from the development of lung cancer is to quit smoking. It does not matter how much or how long you have smoked. Quitting now will reduce your chances not only of lung problems, but also of heart diseases and many other cancers.



## Can I be screened with a standard X-ray instead of a low-dose CT scan?

No. Some doctors recommend that heavy smokers get a chest X-ray once a year to check for lung cancer, but there is no proven data that this helps to prolong life. Experts do NOT recommend chest X-rays as a screening tool for lung cancer.

## Who should be screened for lung cancer?

For some longtime smokers and past smokers, screening can save your lives. If the following 3 statements are all true for you, ask your doctor about screening:

- You are 50 to 80 years old
- You have smoked an amount that is equivalent to at least 1 pack-a-day for 20 years (or 2 packs-a-day for 10 years or 3-packs-a-day for 7 years)
- You still smoke or have quit smoking for less than 15 years

The decision to be screened should take these things into consideration:

- Your general health and health risk – Your level of risk depends mostly on how much and how long you have smoked, and whether you still smoke
- The costs involved in screening – It's not yet clear whether insurance companies will pay for screening or the follow-up tests that are needed if a scan turns out to be abnormal. If you are thinking about screening, ask your doctor what you might have to pay for

