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*“While just under 14 percent of our community currently smokes, lung cancer and other respiratory cancers are still the #1 cancer killer in our community. If everyone quit smoking, the vast majority of all lung cancers could be prevented.”*

Michael Towbin, MD *Thoracic Surgeon*

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Dr. Towbin is board-certified in surgery and is a Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. He has been in practice at Evergreen since 1988.

## Lung Cancer

Lung cancer is a particularly nasty opponent. Due in large part to late detection, the survival rate for patients is only about 12 percent.

### WARNING SIGNS

Lung cancer often does not cause symptoms for many years. As a result, lung cancer is frequently discovered only when physicians are screening patients for other conditions. Symptoms may include:

- A persistent cough
- Chest pain
- Hoarseness
- Weight loss and loss of appetite
- Spit or phlegm that is bloody or rust-colored
- Shortness of breath
- Repeated bouts of pneumonia or bronchitis

If you have any of these symptoms, talk to a doctor immediately.

### RISK FACTORS

- Ninety percent of lung cancers occur in people who smoke. The more a person smokes, the higher the risk. Cigar and cigarette smoke contains chemicals that damage the genetic structure (DNA) of the body's cells, which causes cells to become cancerous.
- People who have a mother, father, brother or sister with lung cancer have a higher risk of the disease.
- People who live in a city for 10 or more years have a slightly higher risk of lung cancer.
- People who are exposed to certain workplace chemicals, such as asbestos, radon or chromium, have a higher risk of lung cancer.

### PREVENTION | LOWER YOUR RISK

There are things you can do to reduce your risk of developing lung cancer:

- If you smoke, quit for good as soon as possible. Not long after you quit, your risk of lung cancer begins to drop. After 10 years of not smoking, the risk of lung cancer is about 50 percent lower compared to continued smokers, and it continues to decrease with time.
- People who eat at least three servings of fruits and vegetables a day have a lower risk of lung cancer. These foods contain cancer-fighting antioxidant vitamins, such as vitamins A and C.
- Avoid second-hand smoke (smoke from other people's cigarettes and cigars).
- Avoid exposure to workplace chemicals that can cause lung cancer.

### SCREENING TESTS

Unlike other cancers, there is no good screening test for lung cancer. Since most people with early lung cancer do not have any symptoms, only a small number of lung cancers are found at an early stage. When it is found early, it's often because of tests that are being done for something else.

Chest X-rays are the most commonly used method of detecting suspected lung cancer. Newer, more sensitive imaging scans, such as CT, PET and MRI, are now able to reveal cancerous growths not detected by conventional X-rays.

### OPTIONS FOR TREATMENT

Many different treatments and combinations of treatments may be used to control lung cancer, depending on the size, location and extent of the tumor, and the general health of the patient.

The Evergreen Cancer Program provides a complete array of treatment options, including surgery, chemotherapy and radiation therapy. Evergreen uses the most sophisticated diagnostic technologies, including PET/CT, to stage and monitor treatment.