ENVISION
MEDICAL IMAGING

Lung Cancer detection with CT
Patient Information Sheet

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in Australia. Tobacco smoking is the most important preventable risk factor for lung cancer. People exposed to significant amounts of asbestos are also considered at high risk of developing lung cancer.

What is the benefit to me of having a Low Dose CT of the chest?

Low Dose CT of the chest has been proven to reduce the risk of death from lung cancer by at least 20% in patients at high risk for lung cancer from cigarette smoking. This is because lung cancers are often detected at an earlier stage when they are curable. Low Dose CT also detects asbestosis (lung scarring), pleural plaque and mesothelioma (pleural cancer) more accurately than a chest X-ray. Whether Low Dose CT reduces the likelihood of death from mesothelioma or asbestosis is not known.

Does screening with standard chest X-rays reduce lung cancer deaths?

No. Large medical trials have shown that chest X-rays are not effective in reducing lung cancer deaths. This is because chest X-rays usually don't show a lung cancer until it has already spread.

How often and for how long is the Low Dose CT test recommended?

Current recommendations are for an annual Low Dose CT. Recommendations may change in future as research into the use of this test continues.

What does the test involve?

A Low Dose CT of the chest involves lying on a flat table in a donut shaped scanner and a breath hold of 6 seconds. There are no injections. The scan is painless.

How will I get the results of the test?

The results of the test will be sent to your referring doctor within 3 working days of your scan. If there are urgent findings, your doctor will be informed promptly.

How do I book the scan and where do I go to get the test?

The scan is performed at Envision Medical Imaging, Unit 5 / 178 Cambridge Street Wembley (opposite St John of God Hospital Subiaco, tel 6382 3888). There is ample free parking at and adjacent to the clinic. You do not need to fast or alter your normal diet.

Low Dose CT of the Chest has risks.

Decisions about screening tests can be difficult and all screening tests have risks. Before having a Low Dose CT of the chest, you may want to discuss the test with your doctor. The risks of a Low Dose CT of the chest include the following:

Finding lung cancer may not improve your health or help you live longer.

Screening may not improve your health or help you live longer if you have advanced lung cancer or if it has already spread to other places in your body. Some cancers never cause symptoms or become life-threatening, but if found by a screening test, the cancer may be treated. It is not known if treatment of these cancers would help you live longer than if no treatment were given, and treatments for cancer may have serious side effects.

False-negative test results can occur.

Screening test results may be normal even though lung cancer is present. A person who receives a false-negative test result (one that shows there is no cancer when there really is) may delay seeking medical care even if there are symptoms.

False-positive test results can occur.

Screening test results may appear to be abnormal even though no cancer is present. A false-positive test result (one that shows there is cancer when there really isn't) can cause anxiety and may be followed by more tests (such as a biopsy), which also have risks.

Low Dose CT of the chest exposes the chest to radiation.

Radiation exposure from the scan may increase the risk of developing certain cancers, such as breast cancer. Fortunately, the likelihood of this is very low (estimated at approximately 1 in 10 000). The likelihood of any person over 50 years of age developing a fatal cancer in their life is approximately 1 in 3, so the additional risk from having a Low Dose CT scan is very low.

Your referring doctor can advise you about your risk for lung cancer and your benefit from low dose CT of the chest.