

Lung cancer

TCM Anti-Cancer Centre
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Alternative names

Lung cancer; Bronchogenic cancer; Cancer - lung (primary); Small cell lung cancer; Non-small cell lung cancer.

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Most lung cancers are caused by cigarette smoking. The more cigarettes you smoke per day and the earlier you started smoking, the greater the risk of lung cancer.

Second-hand smoke has also been shown to increase risk. Government surveys show that as many as 3,000 people each year develop lung cancer from second-hand smoke. High levels of pollution, radiation, and asbestos exposure may also increase risk.

Lung cancer begins by changes in cells that line the airways and can invade adjacent tissues before symptoms are noticed.

There are many types of lung cancer, but most can be categorized into two basic types, "small cell" and "non-small cell." Small cell lung cancer is generally faster growing than non-small cell, but more likely to respond to chemotherapy.

- Small cell cancer is divided into "limited stage" (generally cancer confined to the chest) and "extensive stage" (cancer that has spread outside the chest).
- Non-small cell cancer is divided into four stages, I-IV. Most patients with stage I and II non-small cell tumors and some patients with stage III tumors can undergo surgery with the goal of cure. Stage IV denotes cancer that has spread to other sites in the body (most often bone, brain, or liver) and is, in most cases, not curable.

Men and women die from lung cancer more than any other type of cancer. Lung cancer occurs most often in people between 55 and 65 years old.

Symptoms

- Cough
- Bloody sputum
- Shortness of breath
- Chest pain
- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss

Additional symptoms that may be associated with this disease:

- Weakness
- Swallowing difficulty
- Nail abnormalities
- Joint pain
- Hoarseness or changing voice
- Fever
- Facial swelling
- Facial paralysis
- Eyelid drooping
- Bone pain or tenderness

Signs and tests

Listening to the chest with a stethoscope (auscultation) can sometimes detect fluid that has collected around the lungs from a cancer.

Tests that may be performed include:

- Chest X-ray
- CAT scan of the chest
- Bronchoscopy with washings and biopsy for cytology
- Pleural biopsy
- Lung needle biopsy
- Mediastinoscopy with biopsy
- Open lung biopsy
- Direct surgical resection

Treatment

The treatment depends upon the type of cancer and the stage of the disease.

For small cell cancer, chemotherapy and radiation are usually used when the disease is confined to the chest -- so called "limited stage" disease. Chemotherapy alone is used in other situations (e.g., extensive stage disease).

For non-small cell cancer:

- Surgical resection (cutting out the tumor) is usually done when the cancer has not spread beyond the lung and selected lymph nodes -- stage I, II and selected cases of stage III.
- The combination of chemotherapy and radiation therapy is often used for cancer confined to the lung and lymph nodes that cannot be removed by surgery (stage III).
- Some patients will undergo chemotherapy or a combination of chemotherapy and radiation prior to surgery.
- Chemotherapy alone is used when the cancer is metastatic (stage IV); chemotherapy has been shown to prolong survival and improve quality of life.

TCM's Evaluation of Healing Effect on Such Disease, The prognosis for lung cancer patients is very poor, because by the time a diagnosis is made; two-thirds of the patients have passed the stage where it might be curable. Only 13% of all lung cancer patients live five or more years after diagnosis. Many lung cancers can be treated by TCM's treatment; it is effective for anti-cancer and alleviation of symptoms. However, acupuncture may cause pain and difficulties in breathing.

TCM Treatment approach

1. Herbal Medicine/Formula
2. Acupuncture and Moxibustion
3. Qi-Gong and Other Therapies
4. Medicated Diet and Lifestyle

Differentiation of common syndromes: Total Syndromes: (1) Stagnation of phlegm-heat in the lung (2) Stagnation of vital energy and blood stasis (3) Deficiency of both vital energy and yin

1. Stagnation of phlegm-heat in the lung Fever, a feeling of fullness, distress in the chest, dyspnea with wheezing, coughing with yellowish mucus, dry mouth, reddened tongue with yellow glossy fur, and smooth rapid pulse are all symptoms.

Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle: Removing pathogenic heat and toxic materials. Recipe: Modified Reed rhizome decoction worth a thousand gold Reed rhizome (wei jing), Coix seed (sheng yi ren), Waxgourd seed (dong gua zi), Honeysuckle flower (yin hua), Gypsum (sheng shi gao) at 30 g each; Houttuynia (yu xin cao), Trichosanthes fruit (gua lou) at 12 g each. Apricot kernel (xin ren), Scutellaria root (huang qin), Platycodon root (jie gen), Anemarrhena rhizome (zhi mu), Licorice root (gan cao) at 12 g each. If profuse hemoptysis, adding dried rehmannia root (sheng di huang) and Hyacinth bulb (bai ji) at 15 g each.

Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle: Removing pathogenic heat and toxic materials. Prescription: Shanzhong (RN19), Lieque (LU7), Feishu (BL13), Fenglong (ST 40), Dazhui (DU14), Nei guan (PC6)

2. **Stagnation of vital energy and blood stasis** Dyspnea with wheezing, cough or with sputum, Twinge in the chest radiating to the shoulder and back, stuffy sensation in the chest and shortness of breath, deep purple tongue with ecchymoses, taut or uneven pulse.

Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle: Promoting the flow of qi and blood, Removing blood stasis and anti-cancer.

Recipe: Modified prescriptions of decoction of Four Ingredients with Peach Kernel and Safflower. Scutellaria barbata (ban zhi lian), Rhizome smilacis glabrae (Tu fu ling), Bitter Apricot Kernel (Xin ren) at 15 g each, Red Sage Root (dan shen) 30 g, Chinese Angelica (dang gui), Chuanxiong Rhizome (Chuan xiong), Red Peony Root (chi shao), Safflower (hong hua), Peach Kernel (tao ren) at 12 g each.

Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle: Promoting the flow of qi and blood, Removing blood stasis and anti-cancer. Prescription: quchi (Lill), Lieque ((LU7), Feishu (BL13), Fenglong (ST 40), Dazhui (DU14), Chize (LU5), waiguan (SJ5).

3. **Deficiency of both vital energy and yin Symptoms** include: stuffiness in the chest area, dry cough, sometimes accompanied by blood-streaked mucus (the sound of coughing will be low and weak), palpitation and shortness of breath, dizziness, insomnia, amnesia, spontaneous perspiration, dry mouth, erosion of mucous membrane in the oral cavity, persistent low fever, red tongue with little fur, deep thready and weak pulse.

Herbal medicine treatment Therapeutic principle: Replenishing qi, nourishing yin and anti-cancer.

Recipe: Modified decoction of Prepared Licorice. Prepared Licorice Root (gan cao), Ginseng (Ren shen) at 12 g each; Astragalus Root (huang qi), Siberian Solomonseal Rhizome (huang jing) at 20 g each; Ophiopogon Root (Mai dong), Schisandra Fruit (Wu wei zi), Dried Rehmannia Root (sheng di) at 15g each; Scutellaria Barbata (ban zhi lian), Rhizome Smilacis Glabrae (Tu fu ling) at 20 g each; All the drugs above are to be decocted in water for oral administration.

Acupuncture and Moxibustion Therapeutic principle: Replenishing qi, nourishing yin and anti-cancer. Prescription: Shanzhong (RN19), Feishu (BL13), Shenshu (BL23), Dazhui (DU14), Shenshu (BL 23), Zusanli (ST 36), Sanyinjiao (SP 6).

Life style :

- 1) Stay away from smoke and smokers, if you smoke quit.
- 2) Keep your house as dust-free as possible.
- 3) Eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.
- 4) Reduce stress through relaxation, Qi-Gong or Tai-Ji.
- 5) Join a support group for people with cancer and their families. Emotional support seems to aid in recovery.