

The stages of non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC)

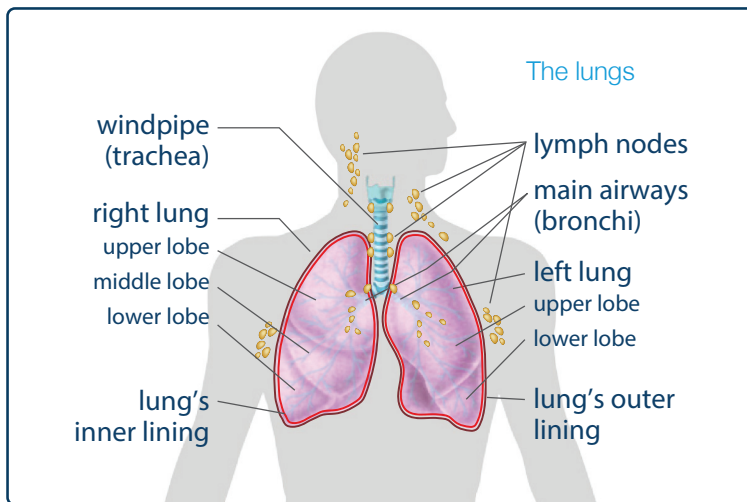


What is lung cancer staging?

Lung cancer staging describes how serious cancer is, including:

- Where cancer is in your lungs
- The size of your tumor
- If and where it has spread to other parts of your body

When you are first diagnosed with NSCLC, your doctor will stage your cancer based on tests. They may stage you again if other tests show your cancer spread.



NSCLC has 3 types:

- **Lung adenocarcinoma** starts in glandular cells, which make mucus in your lungs
- **Squamous cell lung cancer** starts in thin, flat squamous cells that line the inside airways in your lungs
- **Large cell lung cancer** starts in larger cells in any part of your lung

Why should I know my stage?

Knowing your stage helps you and your doctor:

- Understand how advanced your lung cancer is (advanced means it has spread from where it started in your lung)
- Decide on treatment options that will work best for your lung cancer – there are treatments for all stages of NSCLC
- Know how well treatment is working to shrink your lung cancer or stop it from spreading

What are the stages of NSCLC?

The stages of NSCLC are based on the **TNM staging system**, which stands for:

- T Tumor:** the size of your first tumor and where it is in your lungs
- N Node:** if cancer has spread to nearby lymph nodes (tiny bean-shaped organs that are part of your immune system and help your body fight off infections)
- M Metastasis:** if cancer has metastasized (spread) to other parts of your body, such as your brain or bones

Based on the TNM system, the stages of lung cancer are given a number – the lower the number, the less cancer has spread:

	T tumor	N node	M metastasis
	What is the size and location of your lung tumor ?	Has cancer spread to nearby lymph nodes ?	Has cancer metastasized to other parts of your body?
Stage 0 (in situ or in place)	Cancer cells only in top lining of your lung or bronchus	No	No
Stage 1 (I)	Small tumor (up to 4 centimeters, or cm) in only one lung	No	No
Stage 2 (II)	Small tumor (between 4 to 7 cm) in one lung that may have spread within your lungs, such as to your bronchus or lining of your lung	May be in lymph nodes in your lungs	No
Stage 3 (III)	Tumor in one lung (may be more than 7 cm) and spread to other parts of your chest	May be in lymph nodes in your chest	No
Stage 4 (IV)	Tumor of any size in one or both lungs	May be in any lymph nodes in your body	Yes

Stages 1 to 4 are further divided into substages.

Visit [LUNgevity.org](https://www.lungevity.org) to learn more about lung cancer staging