

BROADCAST-To scan or not to scan (for lung cancer)

Lung cancer is the deadliest of all ... taking more lives than breast, colon and prostate cancer combined. Smoking increases a person's risk significantly and treating lung cancer is harder when it's caught later. Cancer navigator Jill Emmons of OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois says people who are between the ages of 55 and 80 and who currently smoke or quit within the past 15 years ago should consider getting a low-dose CT scan.

Heavy pack-a-day smokers for 30 years or two-pack-a-day for 15 years should also consider getting the imaging which can reveal tiny nodules that could be cancerous.

SOT- Cancer navigator Jill Emmons of OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois

"If lung cancer is caught early, it is definitely more treatable. Sometimes patients don't come to us until they are already experiencing symptoms, and by that time, it can be at a later stage and metastasized and gone to other organs." (:21)

People who already have chronic lung disease are also at risk for lung cancer as well as if there's a family history. Emmons says don't ignore chronic symptoms.

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"They could have chronic bronchitis, or if they get repeated pneumonia several times, shortness of breath, wheezing, cough, any of those symptoms, the patient should check with their physician (or provider) and maybe the physician can find out what's going on." (:17)

Cost should not prevent anyone from getting evaluated, having a CT scan, or getting treatment if necessary.

SOT- Cancer navigator Jill Emmons of OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois

"We do have financial navigators who will help you through that process – check with insurance to see if insurance is going to cover it. If it's self-pay, there are payment plans, just anything we can do to help ease that burden on you, because if you do meet the criteria (for a scan) you need to have it done." (:22)

Emmons says navigators can help with scheduling appointments and will be with the patient through every step, including when they get results and if they need treatment. She stresses an online assessment on the OSF HealthCare website – osfhealthcare.org/assessments – is a good place to start if you're not sure if you should be evaluated. And, she also encourages anyone who smokes, to get help to stop.

SOT- Cancer navigator Jill Emmons of OSF HealthCare in Alton, Illinois

"If you need any kind of resources, please check with your primary care provider. We have several resources on how to help you quit smoking." (:11)

Emmons says there's help to stop smoking through your primary care provider who can provide nicotine replacement, medication assistance and behavioral modification therapy