

A new tool in fight against lung cancer: OSF Saint Anthony's offers new lung cancer screenings

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ALTON - The greatest hope for surviving lung cancer lies in early detection. Now there is a new, safer way to be screened for lung cancer at OSF Saint Anthony's Health center. It's called a Low-Dose CT screening, or LDCT.

The low dose CT Lung Cancer Screening Program promotes early detection and treatment of lung cancer and helps improve survival rates. The screening uses a low-dose chest computerized tomography (CT) scan.

With this new tool in its cancer-fighting arsenal, OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center is aiming to lower the mortality rate from lung cancer in the Riverbend community.

"The unfortunate thing is that at the time of diagnosis of lung cancer, the cancer has already metastasized," said Dr. Nadeem Ahmed, a pulmonologist with OSF Saint Anthony's Health Center.

Dr. Ahmed stressed the need for early screening in those who are at risk for lung cancer; low-dose CT lung cancer screening is designed specifically for those high-risk individuals.

The amount of radiation a person is exposed to during a low-dose CT is 90 percent lower than that of a normal CT. Trials have shown low-dose CT to be effective in detection versus that of a traditional X-ray.

"It is almost 30 percent more sensitive in picking up cancer in the early stage than regular X-rays," Dr. Ahmed said.

Certain criteria is applied to determine who is eligible for a low-dose CT lung cancer screening. Those considered high risk are 55 to 74 years old, are a current smoker or former smoker who has quit in the past 15 years and has a smoking history of at least 30-pack years – which means one pack a day for 30 years or two packs a day for 15 years.

The American Cancer Society states that lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among both men and women. More than 200,000 new cases are diagnosed each year in the United States. The prognosis is poor for patients whose cancer is detected in its advanced stages.

Low dose CT Lung Cancer Screening should be considered an option for the asymptomatic individuals (not having signs/symptoms) considered at high risk for lung cancer. The cost of the screening is \$149 and is included in most insurance plans. **Please call (618) 465-LUNG (465-5864) to see if you qualify for a low dose CT Lung Cancer Screening today.**