

In 2007, more than 213,000 Americans will be diagnosed with lung cancer--the number one cause of cancer death in the US among both men and women. Nearly twice as many women die of lung cancer than of breast cancer.

About 85 % of people who develop lung cancer either are or have been smokers. Yet some people who have never smoked get the disease. Because the lungs are large, tumors can grow in them for a long time before they are found. In fact, lung cancer can easily spread outside the lungs without causing any symptoms. The more common symptoms are cough and fatigue. Many people who have these symptoms often assume they are due to smoking itself or to a minor illness, such as a cold.

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Types of Lung Cancer: Doctors determine the type of lung cancer by looking at a biopsy of tumor cells under the microscope. It is important to know the specific type because it helps doctors recommend the best treatment. There are two major types of lung cancer. Non-small cell lung

accounts for about 85% of lung cancers. Among them are these types of tumors.

Adenocarcinoma

is the most common form of lung cancer in the US among both men and women.

Bronchioalveolar carcinoma, or BAC,

is less common type. It forms near the lungs' air sacs.

Epidermoid carcinoma (also called squamous cell carcinoma)

forms in the lining of the bronchial tubes.

Large cell carcinomas

to non small cell lung cancers that are neither adenocarcinomas nor epidermoid cancer.

Small cell lung cancer accounts for about 15% of lung cancers in the US. As a rule, small cell lung cancer has spread---at least in tiny amounts---by the time doctors find it.

The next entry will explain diagnostic tools for lung cancers.