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Lung cancer: 8 symptoms for rapid diagnosis

Early-stage lung cancer has a good prognosis, but early detection is crucial. Lung cancer is the leading cause of death from cancer in both men and women. Māori have a much higher incidence and mortality.

The persisting cough in the patient with COPD ± smoker is a common presenting symptom. The 8 symptoms¹ are:

- Cough >3 weeks
- Haemoptysis
- Chest or shoulder pain
- Dyspnoea
- Hoarseness
- Weight loss >10%
- Unresolving chest infection
- Symptoms suggestive of metastasis (liver, bone, brain, skin). In some parts of the country, if the CXR is suggestive of a curable lesion the chest CT can be bypassed but refer them to the respiratory team (refer local pathways). The e-referral should state “**high suspicion of cancer**”. In those cases, the team may arrange a PET-CT scan.

Reference:

1. [Lung Cancer: What's new, with Paul Dawkins, Respiratory Physician](#) Goodfellow Webinar archive (2022)

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