



Lung CT for Screening

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I heard it is better to get a CT scan rather than an x-ray of your chest. If you are at risk for lung cancer, is this true? If so, why does my family doctor say my insurance will not pay for it?

Taine Pechet, MD, Thoracic Surgeon at Penn Medicine, responds:

You are correct that the CT scan provides more information than the chest x-ray. There have been a lot of trials looking to show that any type of radiographic screening is effective when looking at large populations. It is only recently that this has been shown, with CT scans used for screening in patients at a high risk of developing a lung cancer in the future showing an overall survival benefit. Unfortunately, as this is a recent finding, and there is no consensus on the use of chest imaging for screening of lung cancer, many insurance companies are still not paying for the screening study, but I expect that will change in the coming years. Your family doctor may be able to cite the *New England Journal of Medicine* publication to help persuade the insurance company to pay.

You can learn more about the results of the National Lung Screening Trial study in [Dr. Torigian's presentation](#) at the CANPrevent Lung Cancer Conference.

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[lung cancer](#), [screening](#), [CTNo](#)

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