

NHS Coventry and Rugby Lung Health Check - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the NHS Lung Health Check?

A Lung Health Check is like an 'MOT' of your lungs and will check that they are working as they should be. The programme aims to detect lung disease in its early stages, when treatments are often simpler and more effective by providing quick, easily accessible screenings for those deemed at higher risk of lung conditions.

Most patients will find that their lungs work fine, but some might benefit from further tests or treatment such as a CT scan at our mobile unit. We encourage everyone invited to attend their appointment, because finding any lung problems early can make a big difference.

Why have I received an invitation from the programme?

You have been sent a letter because this programme has identified from your patient records that you qualify because you:

- Live in Coventry or Rugby and are registered with a GP practice
- Are aged 55 to under-75
- Are a current or former smoker

When will patients be invited to an NHS Lung Health Check?

The programme began inviting eligible people in June 2021 on a practice-by-practice basis. We expect all eligible patients whose GP practices are participating to have been invited by March 2024. If you think you should be invited please call the bookings team on 02475 268 666.

What happens at my NHS Lung Health Check?

The initial Lung Health Checks will be conducted over the telephone.

One of our specialist NHS Lung Health Check Nurses will phone you to carry out your check at the agreed appointment time. The health care advisor will ask you a few questions about your overall lung health, lifestyle, and history. The answers will be used to assess your risk of developing lung cancer in the future. The appointment will last around 15 minutes.

You will only need to attend an appointment in person if you are asked to have a CT scan. If you are invited for a CT scan you will also see a specialised nurse at the same time as your appointment, who will go over the procedure and answer any clinical questions you may have.

If your assessment shows that you are at high risk of developing lung cancer, you will be invited to have a face to face appointment with one of our specialised nurses to have a CT scan of your lungs. During your appointment your height and weight will be taken, and she will go over the procedure and answer any clinical questions you may have.

What is a CT scan?

A low-dose CT scan checks for the early signs of lung cancer, before you have any symptoms. This is a special scan that uses a very low dose of radiation and a computer to take a detailed picture of your lungs. It will be carried out by a specially trained Radiographer. The low dose CT scan will expose you to a small amount of radiation. This is a very low dose, around the same amount as about one year's worth of radiation from the natural environment.

Will I be offered a CT scan?

If you are assessed as being at an increased risk of lung cancer, you will be offered a low dose CT scan. If you are offered a scan, the nurse will talk you through the benefits and risks, and you will be able to ask any questions that you may have. The team will book the appointment for your CT scan at the Lung Health Check should you wish to proceed. Most people's scans are normal, and no further action is needed. We will invite everyone who attends at CT scan appointment a second lung health check every 2 years until the age of 75 yrs. is reached.

Where will my CT scan appointment take place?

The CT scan will take place at a specially designed mobile unit which will be placed at convenient community locations. The team will share details of the location prior to your appointment. The CT unit runs 7 days a week from 8 AM to 8 PM so please rearrange your appointment with the booking team if your appointment is not convenient.

Is it safe to attend my CT scan appointment?

Yes, it is safe to attend your CT scan appointment. Please be reassured that all of the Lung Health Check team will follow strict infection control measures to ensure your safety and minimise any risk during your appointment. The team will be wearing the right PPE, social distancing measures have been put in place and all equipment will be sanitised following each appointment. In line with current guidelines, we ask that you please attend your CT appointment alone and wear a face covering.

Can I bring someone to my CT scan appointment?

If you need someone with you, please limit it to one person. You might be required to wear a face covering depending upon guidance at the time of your appointment. As space is limited, any person accompanying you will be asked to wait outside until you are ready for collection; please note there is no waiting area on the CT mobile unit. If you need any additional accommodations, please contact the team on 02475 268 666.

What will happen during the CT scan appointment?

When you arrive at your appointment, we will take your height and weight to make sure we have this information correct in your record. During the scan, you will usually lie flat on your back on a bed that moves slowly into the CT scanner. You will not need to remove any clothing but you may be asked to remove any jewellery or metal items.

Specially trained staff control the scanner and will be in the room throughout your scan. You will be able to see and speak to them during the scan. When a scan is taken, you will need to lie still and follow simple breathing instructions for 10 seconds. This makes sure the pictures are not blurred.

The scan is painless, and you will be able to eat, drink or drive as normal after your scan. The scan only takes a few minutes, but your appointment will take around 30 minutes in total. After your scan, you should receive the results of your Lung Health Check within 4-6 weeks of your visit. The Lung Health Check team will write to you and your GP with the result.

Common incidental findings

Your CT scan may show other incidental findings different from your lungs. The most common ones are:

Emphysema

The CT scan will show if the air sacs (alveoli) in your lungs have been destroyed. Cigarette smoke and other particles you breathe in can damage the walls of these air sacs. This damage can make it hard for you to breathe out like normal.

The best thing to stop further damage is to stop smoking.

If your emphysema has been graded as moderate or severe on your CT scan report, and you have never been diagnosed with a respiratory condition such as COPD, we will refer you for a breathing test to check how.

Coronary Calcification

This is a collection of calcium in your heart's arteries, also called your coronary arteries. This is a common finding on scans and confirms an increased risk of cardiovascular disease.

We would inform your GP of these findings so they can consider if any further treatment or referrals are needed.

Usually this will mean being prescribed statins, if you are not already taking them, and having advice on healthy lifestyle, such as a balanced diet, regular exercise and stop smoking if you are a current smoker.

They may also consider referring you to a specialist if you have any cardiac symptoms of concern such as chest pains.

I don't speak English as a first language. What support is available?

The patient booklet has been translated into Urdu, Polish, Punjabi, and Romanian. Please contact the booking team on 02475 268 666 and we will arrange for the translated booklet to be sent to you. You can also request translation and interpretation services for your appointment through the telephone booking service on .

I have a learning disability. What support can I have at my appointment?

The Lung Health Check team can share an information leaflet in easy read. We can also make extra time available on the mobile unit and you can bring either a family member, a friend or carer to your appointment. If you need any extra support prior to your appointment, please contact the booking team on 02475 268 666.

Does the mobile unit have wheelchair access?

Yes. The mobile unit is wheelchair accessible for those who need it. You will have to let us know in advance during your telephone consultation, as you may need a longer appointment.

I smoke but I am 75 or older. Will I be invited for a Lung Health Check?

No. The programme will not invite anyone over the age of 75 as we are only able to invite people who are aged less than 75 at time of the first CT Scan. We are inviting people who currently smoke or have once smoked and aged between 55 years and less than 75 as they have been identified as being most at risk of developing lung problems.

If you notice any of the following, please contact your GP as soon as possible for an appointment:

- Unexplained persistent cough or a change in a cough you have had for a long time - it may sound different or be painful when you cough
- Coughing up blood
- Unexplained persistent breathlessness
- feeling tired all the time (fatigue)
- Persistent or recurrent chest infection
- Unexplained weight loss
- Loss of appetite

Why is this programme not available to everyone?

The eligibility criteria for an NHS Lung Health Check have been set by NHS England. As a trial programme, the Lung Health Check Programme is currently only being rolled out in stages to select GP practices in the Coventry and Rugby area. Research has shown that the areas that have been selected would greatly benefit from screening.

How can I tell the difference between symptoms of lung cancer and COVID-19?

We understand that some symptoms of lung cancer are similar to those of COVID-19. It is important to look out for anything that is unusual for you. If you notice any of the following, without COVID-19 symptoms. Please contact your GP as soon as possible for an appointment:

- Unexplained persistent cough or a change in a cough you have had for a long time - it may sound different or be painful when you cough
- Coughing up blood
- Unexplained persistent breathlessness
- feeling tired all the time (fatigue)
- Persistent or recurrent chest infection
- Unexplained weight loss
- Loss of appetite

If you are unsure or do not want to attend because of COVID-19 concerns, please contact the Lung Health Check team to discuss this on 02475 268 666.

For any further queries, please contact the Coventry and Rugby Lung Health Check team on 02475 268 666