

Atrium Health Navicent Urges Smokers to Commit to Quitting During Lung Cancer Awareness Month

Smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer

MACON, Ga., Nov. 8, 2023 – In observance of Lung Cancer Awareness Month, Atrium Health Navicent encourages smokers to commit to quitting and is raising awareness for lifesaving lung screenings which can detect cancer earlier, when it's easier to treat.

Smoking is the leading risk factor for lung cancer, which causes 1 in 5 cancer deaths. Each year, more people die of lung cancer than of colon, breast and prostate cancers combined. Overall, the chance that a man will develop lung cancer in his lifetime is about 1 in 16. For a woman, the risk is about 1 in 17.

The biggest way to reduce your risk of lung cancer is to quit smoking. Quitting, even for a day, is an important step toward a healthier life. Other ways to reduce risk include limiting exposure to cancer-causing agents such as radon and asbestos, and eating a healthy diet with plenty of fruits and vegetables.

“People need to understand that quitting cigarettes is hard because they are so addictive. But there is treatment for people hooked on tobacco,” said Dr. Anthony Holden, an Atrium Health Navicent cardiothoracic surgeon. “Some people can simply quit, but it’s difficult. Having an aide to help you do that is beneficial. By going to smoking cessation counseling or meeting with your physician, you can get crutches to help you become tobacco-free. Some strategies are nicotine patches or lozenges, other medications to help you wean off cigarettes or just having someone to talk to. Support helps.”

Smokers with an extensive pack-year history should consider talking with a doctor about their risk of lung cancer and options for early detection. Most lung cancer cases are diagnosed at later stages when the cancer has spread to other organs. At that point, treatment options are less likely to be effective and survival is lower. But, with early detection and intervention, lung cancer can be survivable.

In Georgia, 24 percent of cases are caught at an early stage. [Low-dose CT scans](#), such as those offered at Atrium Health Navicent, can be helpful tools for individuals at a high risk for developing lung cancer, like smokers.

The U.S. Preventative Services Task Force and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have issued recommendations for lung cancer screenings. Annual low-dose CT screenings are recommended for adults who have a 20 pack-year or more smoking history, **and** who smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years **and** who are between 50 and 80 years old. A “pack-year” is smoking an average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year. For example, a person could have a 20 pack-year history by smoking one pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years.

A study on early detection of lung cancer found that the low-dose cancer screening test can reduce mortality by 20 percent for those at high risk.

Atrium Health Navicent offers low-dose CT lung screenings at several locations, including:

- Atrium Health Navicent Imaging & Laboratory (1650 Hardeman Ave., Macon)
- Atrium Health Navicent Baldwin (821 N. Cobb St., Milledgeville)
- Atrium Health Navicent Peach (1960 Ga. 247 Connector, Byron)
- Atrium Health Navicent Imaging Monroe (120 N. Lee St., Suite B, Forsyth)

If you have had a lung nodule found on a CT scan, it is important to follow up with your primary care provider to determine your risk and next steps. The Advanced Lung Clinic at [Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center](#) was

established to help patients get treatment for lung cancer as early as possible. The clinic provides advanced, comprehensive care when a lung nodule (a small, round abnormal growth of tissue) is discovered by accident or through lung cancer screening. Most lung nodules are noncancerous, but tests are needed to make sure.

For patients with lung cancer, a full spectrum of treatment options is available right here in central Georgia. Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center offers services ranging from prevention and diagnostics to treatment and survivorship all at one location, creating a one-stop place for cancer care.

“Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center is a hidden gem. There’s nothing for lung cancer treatment that you’d need to go out of town to get. We have an exceptional and highly skilled team and I’m really proud to be part of it,” Holden said. “We do it all here, we’re close to home and we do it well.”

If you or a loved one has concerns about cancer risk factors, available screenings or cancer care, contact Atrium Health Navicent Peyton Anderson Cancer Center at 478-633-3000. For information about resources for how to quit smoking, call 478-633-2614. For information about being referred to the Advanced Lung Clinic, call 478-633-8850. To find a doctor, visit www.NavicentHealth.org and click “Find A Doctor.”

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent is the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia and is committed to its mission of elevating health and well-being through compassionate care. Atrium Health Navicent is part of [Advocate Health](#), which is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, and is the third-largest nonprofit health system in the United States, created from the combination of Atrium Health and Advocate Aurora Health. Atrium Health Navicent provides high-quality, personalized care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region. As part of the largest, integrated, nonprofit health system in the Southeast, it is also able to tap into some of the nation’s leading medical experts and specialists with Atrium Health, allowing it to provide the best care close to home – including advanced innovations in virtual medicine and care. Throughout its 125-year history in the community, Atrium Health Navicent has remained dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. It is also one of the leading teaching hospitals in the region, helping to ensure viability for rural health care for the next generation. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

About Advocate Health

[Advocate Health](#) is the third-largest nonprofit integrated health system in the United States – created from the combination of Advocate Aurora Health and [Atrium Health](#). Providing care under the names [Advocate Health Care](#) in Illinois, Atrium Health in the Carolinas, Georgia and Alabama, and [Aurora Health Care](#) in Wisconsin, Advocate Health is a national leader in clinical innovation, health outcomes, consumer experience and value-based care, with [Wake Forest University School of Medicine](#) serving as the academic core of the enterprise. Headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina, Advocate Health serves nearly 6 million patients and is engaged in hundreds of clinical trials and research studies. It is nationally recognized for its expertise in cardiology, neurosciences, oncology, pediatrics and rehabilitation, as well as organ transplants, burn treatments and specialized musculoskeletal programs. Advocate Health employs nearly 150,000 team members across 67 hospitals and over 1,000 care locations and offers one of the nation’s largest graduate medical education programs with over 2,000 residents and fellows across more than 200 programs. Committed to equitable care for all, Advocate Health provides nearly \$5 billion in annual community benefits.

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