

# Lung Cancer

## Lung Cancer in the U.S.

Lung cancer is the second most common cancer among both women and men, second to breast and prostate cancer respectively. It accounts for 13% of all new cancer cases. Because of its low survival rate, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths, accounting for 28% of the total. According to the 1998 American Cancer Society, *Cancer Facts & Figures*, an estimated 171,500 people in the U.S. were diagnosed with lung cancer and the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) reports that 154,472 people died from this disease. In the late 1980's, lung cancer deaths for U.S. men stopped rising and have been slowly falling since the early 1990's. However, for women, lung cancer deaths continued to rise in the 1990's.

The most effective prevention for lung cancer is to never smoke.

Because of its low survival rate, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths, accounting for 28% of the total.

## Risk Factors for Lung Cancer

- Smoking is currently estimated to cause 85-90% of all lung cancer cases. The more you smoke the more likely you are to get lung cancer.
- The risk of dying from lung cancer is 22 times higher among male smokers and 12 times higher among female smokers than among people who have never smoked.
- Cigar and pipe smoking increase the risk of lung cancer.
- Breathing second-hand smoke also contributes to lung cancer risk for non-smokers.
- Two well-know causes of work-related lung cancer are radon and asbestos.
- People may also be exposed to enough radon at home to increase their chance of developing lung cancer, especially if they smoke.
- People with low intakes of fruits and vegetables have a higher risk of developing lung cancer.

## Prevention of Lung Cancer

- **The most effective prevention for lung cancer is to never smoke.**
- Even if you have already smoked, quitting now can make a difference. **Ten years after quitting, cigarette smokers cut their chances of getting lung cancer in half.**
- Homes should be tested for radon.

## Early Detection of Lung Cancer

- There are no good screening tests to detect lung cancer early.
- Only 16% of lung cancers are found at the earliest stage, and even for these people, only half will be alive five years later.
- Cases detected at the distant stage (when disease has spread to another part of the body) have only a 2% chance of living five more years.
- The best way to reduce the chance of dying of lung cancer is to not smoke tobacco.

## Radon in Maine Homes

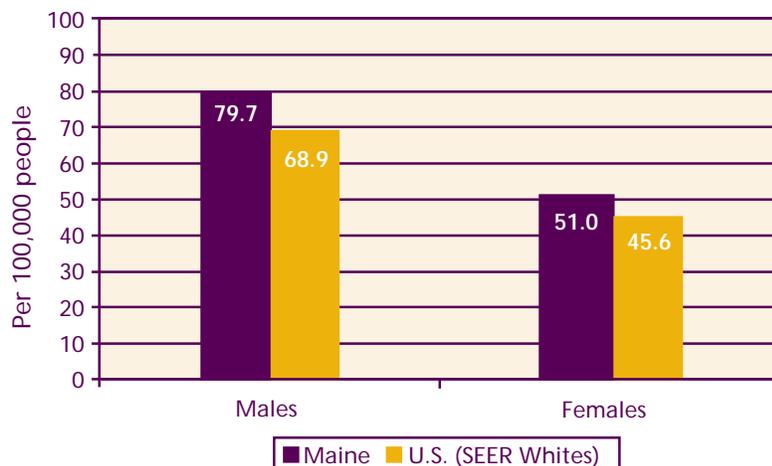
- Approximately 1/3 of Maine homes have radon concentrations above the U.S. EPA's action level of 4 picocuries per liter of air. In Southern Maine, approximately 1/2 of the homes have high radon levels.
- All Maine homes should be tested for radon.
- For additional information about testing for radon in your home call the **Maine Bureau of Health, Radiation Control Program at (800) 232-0842.**

## Burden of Lung Cancer in Maine

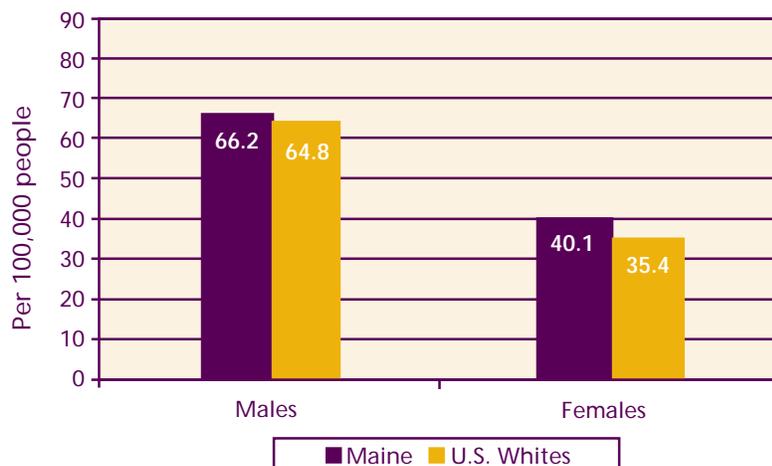
- In 1997 and 1998, an average of 577 men and 449 women each year were diagnosed with lung cancer.
- During the same time period, an average of 483 men and 376 women each year died of lung cancer.
- Over 80% of the lung cancer cases diagnosed in Maine are in men and women over 60 years old.

The age-adjusted incidence rates for lung cancer in both men and women were statistically higher (more cases) in Maine than the U.S. While there are many factors that may contribute to this difference, smoking is a major cause of lung cancer in Maine.

**Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates by Sex, Maine and U.S.**  
Lung Cancer, 1997-1998



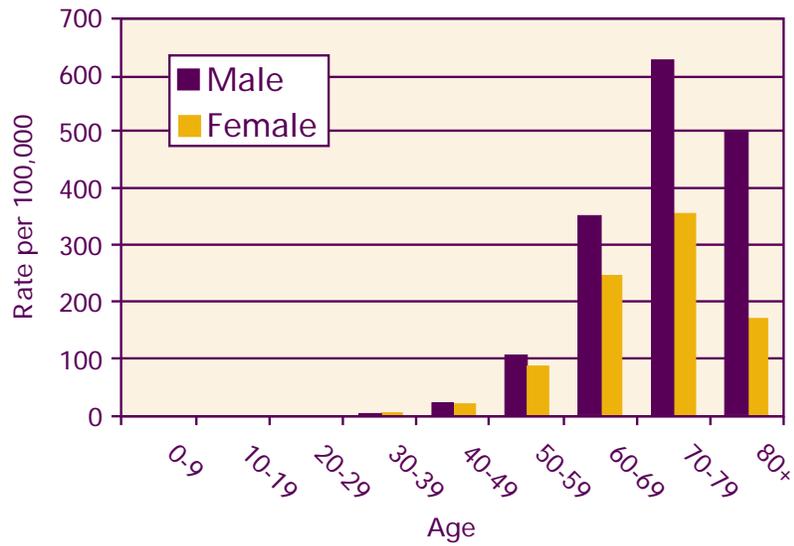
**Age-Adjusted Mortality Rates by Sex, Maine and U.S.**  
Lung Cancer, 1997-1998



The age-adjusted mortality rate for lung cancer was statistically higher (more deaths) for women in Maine compared to the U.S.

Lung cancer is much more common as people get older. Within each age group, the rates are higher for men than for women.

**Maine Age-Specific Incidence Rates**  
Lung Cancer, 1997-1998



Within Maine, no single county has a statistically higher or lower rate of lung cancer incidence than the rest of the state. (See Incidence Rates, page 43, for 95% confidence intervals.)

Maine = 63.2  
National (SEER<sup>1</sup> Whites) = 55.6

<sup>1</sup> Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results

**Maine Age-Adjusted Lung Cancer Incidence Rates by County**  
1997-1998

