



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

**Add 'Lung Cancer Screening' to Your November Checklist
so You Can Breathe Easier**

Lung Cancer CT Scans Are Quick, Painless and Noninvasive

O'FALLON, Ill. — Rake leaves – check. Store lawnmower for winter – check. Buy Thanksgiving turkey – check. Schedule lung cancer screening – what?

Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) is encouraging all eligible adults to add a lung cancer CT scan to their November to-do list since this month is also Lung Cancer Awareness Month. A lung cancer screening can detect nodules or spots on a lung, which may be an early indicator of lung cancer.

Individuals aged 50 or older who have a history of smoking – at least a pack a day for 20 years or two packs a day for 10 years – are at risk of developing lung cancer. More people in the United States die from lung cancer than any other form of cancer, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

Yet the national screening rate for lung cancer [stands at 6%](#), according to the American College of Surgeons – far below screening rates for colorectal and breast cancers, which rank 70% and 80%, respectively.

Dr. Brian A. Reichardt, a pulmonologist at HSHS Medical Group Multispecialty Care in O'Fallon and HSHS Medical Group Pulmonology Specialty Clinic in Breese, said there is no need for individuals to feel nervous about a low-dose lung cancer CT scan. It takes only a minute and requires the patient to simply lie on a table that slides in and out of the machine.

"In the time it takes to text your friends about dinner plans, you can get a lung cancer screening," Reichardt said. "It's quick, painless and noninvasive."

Dr. Reichardt additionally notes that many people consider lung cancer a "smoker's disease" but cautions that while it is true smoking is the top cause of lung cancer by a large margin, [approximately 10% to 20% of cases in the U.S.](#) occur in people who have never smoked or have smoked fewer than 100 cigarettes in their life.

“Exposure to secondhand smoke can play a part, as nonsmokers have a 20% to 30% greater chance of developing lung cancer if they are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work. Other factors may include radon, occupational exposures to carcinogens and outdoor air pollution,” he said.

If a scan happens to show an abnormality, HSHS ministries in Illinois offer the technology, expertise and experience to care for and accompany patients in their cancer journey. The cancer program at HSHS St. Elizabeth’s Hospital in O’Fallon is accredited by the Commission on Cancer, a program of the American College of Surgeons.

Although early detection is key with all diseases, individuals must be particularly vigilant with lung cancer since it usually features no initial symptoms. If a screening catches lung cancer before it spreads, patients are [63% more likely](#) to live at least five additional years, according to the American Lung Association.

Patients should talk with their primary care provider about their personal risks and request a referral for a lung cancer CT screening. Once they have a referral, they can call HSHS central scheduling at 217-757-6565 to make an appointment at a convenient HSHS location.

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About Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS)

Hospital Sisters Health System (HSHS) is a Catholic health care ministry founded in 1875. Dedicated to our Mission to reveal and embody Christ’s healing love for all people through high-quality Franciscan health care, HSHS clinicians provide exceptional care centered on the whole person. Based in Springfield, Illinois, HSHS employs more than 11,000 colleagues who provide care in 13 acute-care, children’s and critical-access hospitals and home health and hospice programs in Central and Southern Illinois and Eastern Wisconsin. HSHS is aligned with more than 1,000 primary and specialty physicians and advanced practitioners through its owned affiliates [HSHS Medical Group](#) and [Prairie Cardiovascular](#) and its partnership with [Prevea Health](#). For more information about HSHS, visit [hshs.org](https://www.hshs.org).