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# Lung cancer rates rising among those who never smoked: The reasons are shocking

Maitree Baral

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Increasing lung cancer rates among non-smokers in India are linked to air pollution, secondhand smoke, and genetic factors. A study from Tata Memorial Hospital revealed that lung cancer affects India's younger population earlier than in Western countries.



On one hand while awareness is rising and people are being educated about the harmful effects of smoking, on the other hand, people who never smoked in their life are being diagnosed with lung cancer.

"Because there are currently no screening guidelines for nonsmokers, lung cancer can be difficult to detect in its early stages," writes one reputed health journal.

## 10% to 20% of people who develop lung cancer have never smoked

A recent Indian study has found that lung cancer accounts for a substantial portion of cancer-related deaths in India. Researchers from Tata Memorial Hospital, have found that lung cancer research output from India to global research output stands at 0.51. The findings of the study published in Lancet's eClinical Medicine Journal manifests in India ten years earlier as compared to Western countries, where the age of diagnosis is between 54 and 70. This stresses that India's younger population is more vulnerable to lung cancer.

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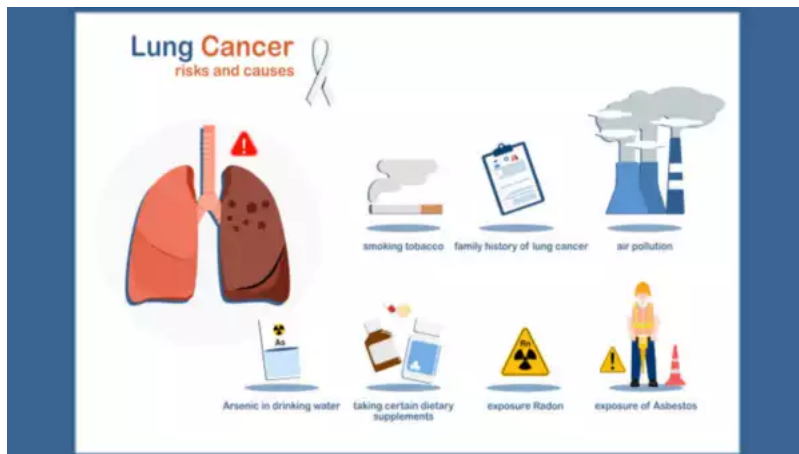
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"The rate of lung cancer has surged from 6.62 per 1,00,000 in 1990 to 7.7 per 1,00,000 in 2019 and a significant rise is expected in urban areas by 2025," the study found.



While the symptoms of lung cancer need to be discussed separately, let's find out what's driving lung cancer cases these days.

## Air pollution is the culprit

Air pollution, particularly from sources such as vehicle emissions, industrial byproducts, and burning fossil fuels, has a substantial impact on lung health and can increase the risk of lung cancer.

"Air quality in the national capital has already reached the "Very Poor" category as of October 23 and the situation is expected to remain "very poor" in the next seven days as per the air quality early warning system for Delhi. As per the forecast of the Indian Meteorological Department, the ventilation index in Delhi on Diwali night is forecasted to be less than 1000 m2/s, with an average wind speed between 1 to 2 m/s during the evening/ night of 31st October. Typically, when the ventilation index is lower than 6000 m2/s with an average wind speed of less than 2.7 m/s, it is not favourable for the dispersion of pollutants. Hence, pollutants from firecrackers (in addition to other sources) will not be able to blow away and the concentration of particulate particulate matter would further rise sharply" says

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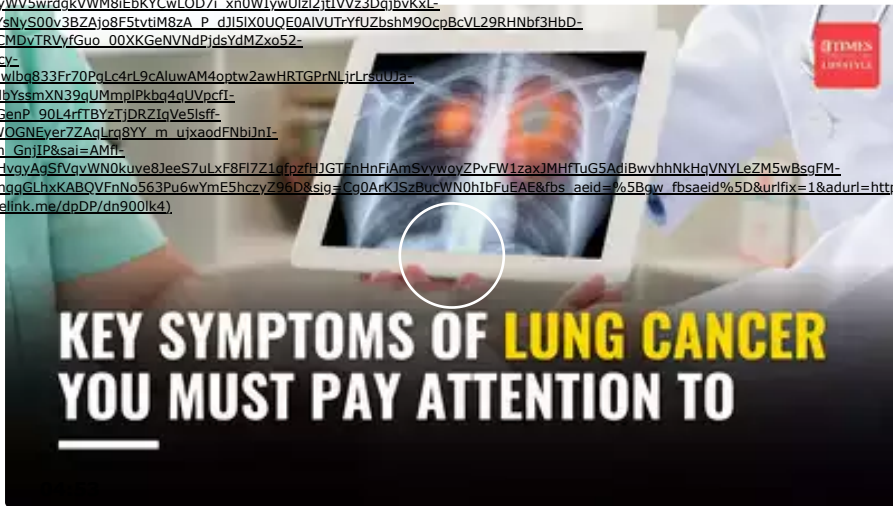
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## Key symptoms of lung cancer you must pay attention to

Respiratory issues are another major concern for non-smokers exposed to smoke. Secondhand smoke can cause immediate breathing problems, especially in children and people with asthma, as well as chronic respiratory conditions like bronchitis. It has been linked to a higher incidence of asthma attacks, increased respiratory infections, and a weakened immune system.

Secondhand smoke also affects pregnant women and young children. Pregnant women exposed to smoke risk complications such as low birth weight, preterm birth, and developmental issues in their babies. For children, passive smoking is associated with ear infections, developmental delays, and even sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). Overall, secondhand smoke exposure is a severe public health issue that can lead to a range of diseases and health complications for non-smokers.



About the Author

**Maitree Baral** >

Maitree Baral is a seasoned journalist with a passion for putting facts and uncovering compelling stories on health and **Read More**

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