



Understanding a Spot on Your Lungs

A lung nodule, often called a spot on your lung, is a solid area of tissue that has formed in an area where it should not be. Most lung nodules are harmless and cause no problems. However, some lung nodules turn out to be cancer (fewer than 5 out of 100). Nodules that are more than one centimeter (about a half inch) in size are more likely to be cancer.

DETECTING LUNG NODULES

Lung nodules show up on an X-ray or a CT scan. You may have received one of these tests because the nodule was causing you symptoms or the nodule may have been detected when you had an X-ray or a CT scan for a different reason.

IF YOU HAVE A LUNG NODULE

If you have a lung nodule it is very important you are seen regularly by a doctor who specializes in care for lung nodules. This is because treatment for a lung nodule often depends upon how it changes over time. Only the doctor monitoring you will know if the nodule has changed or requires treatment. At the BMC Lung Nodule Clinic, we specialize in caring for patients like you. Typically, when a lung nodule is found, you will have another CT scan in a few months to see if it has changed size. Most lung nodules that are not cancer do not grow. If a small nodule is an early lung cancer, it usually takes several months to get bigger. So, even if a small nodule is cancerous, it is very likely that it will still be small and treatable.

If the nodule is large, or changes during the time you are having CT scans, your doctor may suggest having it biopsied or removed. A biopsy involves taking a small

piece of lung tissue. A doctor may use a small camera, ultrasound, or CT-scan to locate the nodule. A small needle is then used to remove some of the tissue. The tissue is then sent to the lab for examination. Biopsies are usually not recommended for small nodules because it is difficult to perform the biopsy safely. A large or growing lung nodule can be removed through a surgical procedure in which a thoracic surgeon makes a small incision into your chest and cuts out the nodule. It is then sent to the lab for examination.

If you have a lung nodule and are a smoker, it is very important that you stop smoking. Smoking increases the risk for lung cancer. We can help you quit smoking by scheduling an appointment in our smoking cessation clinic.

The Lung Nodule Clinic at Boston Medical Center will see you quickly and develop a plan for your lung health while working in consultation with your primary care physician.

To schedule your appointment in the Lung Nodule Clinic, call 617.638.5864

Ehab Billatos, MD

Katrina Steiling, MD MSc