

World Lung Day 2025

25 September



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Date of publication: 3 September 2025

Dr Chrystal's vision is to educate and motivate the individual and population towards better health outcomes.

Her mission is to help make sense of the rich Science articles that are important to health to the everyday person through her articles and to highlight the key health issues that affect you.

#WorldLungDay

World Lung Day, observed annually on 25 September, is a global campaign to raise awareness about lung health and the urgent need to reduce the burden of respiratory diseases. Initiated by the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS) and its partners, the day highlights the critical role of healthy lungs in overall wellbeing and advocates for action on key issues such as air pollution, smoking, and access to healthcare. World Lung Day serves as a call to action for governments, organisations, and individuals to unite in promoting prevention, research, and equitable access to care to improve lung health worldwide.

Why Healthy Lungs Matter

Our lungs play a crucial role in keeping us alive and well. They provide oxygen for energy, remove harmful carbon dioxide, protect us from infections, and support the heart in circulating healthy blood. With healthy lungs, we can stay active, communicate with ease, and enjoy a better quality of life every day.

Breathing Under Threat: The Impact of Lung Diseases

Lung diseases such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and lung cancer represent a major burden on global health. Asthma affects millions worldwide, limiting daily activities and increasing the risk of severe respiratory attacks. COPD, often linked to smoking and long-term exposure to pollutants, is a progressive disease that leads to breathlessness, disability, and premature death. Lung cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related mortality, with high rates of late diagnosis contributing to poor survival outcomes.

The impact of these conditions extends beyond individual patients to families, communities, and healthcare systems. Together, they account for millions of hospital visits, lost productivity, and significant healthcare costs every year. Raising awareness is vital—not only to promote early detection and treatment, but also to encourage prevention strategies such as reducing tobacco use, improving air quality, and supporting lung health initiatives worldwide. Healthy lungs are essential for life, and protecting them is a shared responsibility.

Global Lung Cancer Prevalence

Lung cancer remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer-related death globally¹.

Notably, among never-smokers, lung cancer has emerged as the 5th leading cause of cancer death globally, strongly linked to air pollution and predominantly presenting as adenocarcinoma.²

Lung Cancer in Singapore

From 2018 to 2022, lung cancer accounted for 13.4% of new cancer cases in men and 7.9% in women—making it the **third most common cancer in men and third in women in Singapore**.³

Risk Factors for Lung Cancer

- **Cigarette smoking** is the number one risk factor of lung cancer. The risk of having lung cancer increases with the number of cigarettes smoked each day and the duration of smoking.
- **Second hand smoke** (passive smoke) is a major risk factor of lung cancer among non-smokers. Passive smoking can increase the risk of developing lung cancer by about 30%. No amount of exposure to second-hand smoke is safe.
- **Age.** Lung cancer is more common in people above the age of 40.
- **Exposure to cancer-causing chemicals** increases the risk of lung cancer, e.g. asbestos, coal gas, chromates, nickel, arsenic, vinyl chloride, mustard gas and radon.
- **Air Pollution.** Those who live in more polluted cities have a higher risk of lung cancer than those who live in less polluted cities. The World Health Organisation estimates that there are about 4 million excess deaths per year worldwide due to air pollution. One of the largest reasons is due to lung cancer.
- **Personal or family history:** the risk of lung cancer may be higher if your parents, brothers or sisters, or children have had lung cancer. A lung cancer survivor, especially those who have smoked, may develop another form of lung cancer.

The most effective method to reduce the risk of getting lung cancer is to avoid smoking totally.

¹ chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/pr359_E.pdf

² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/feb/03/lung-cancer-never-smokers-rise-worldwide-air-pollution>

³ <https://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg/learn-about-cancer/types-of-cancer/lung-cancer.html>

Signs and Symptoms of Lung Cancer

Lung cancer may not cause symptoms in the early stages. When they do appear, they can include:

- Feeling weak or tired all the time
- Losing weight without trying
- Changes in the voice (such as hoarseness)
- A cough that doesn't go away or keeps getting worse
- Coughing up blood
- Shortness of breath or wheezing
- Chest infections that keep coming back
- Chest pain that doesn't go away
- Loss of appetite
- Swelling in the neck, face, or under the arms (from spread of the cancer)

Lung Cancer Screening

Finding lung cancer early gives patients a much better chance of survival. Two methods you may hear about are:

1. Low-Dose CT scan

- A special type of X-ray that can find lung cancer early.
- Recommended for people **50–80 years old** who smoked heavily (1 pack a day for 20 years) and who still smoke or quit within the last 15 years.
- Can save lives, but sometimes shows “false alarms” (spots that are not cancer).

2. Liquid Biopsy

- A **blood test** that looks for pieces of cancer DNA floating in the blood.
- May help detect different types of cancer with just one test.

Low-Dose CT scan at Asia HealthPartners

Early detection can save lives. A **low-dose CT scan** is available at **Asia HealthPartners** for individuals at higher risk of lung cancer. This safe and effective screening tool helps identify lung cancer at its earliest, most treatable stages.



Contact us today to learn more or book your screening appointment.

Protecting Your Lungs: Simple Steps for Better Breathing

Healthy lungs are vital for living well, yet they are constantly exposed to risks from pollution, lifestyle habits, infections, and even global environmental changes. The good news is that there are practical steps we can all take to safeguard our lung health.

Breathe Clean Air

Air pollution is a leading cause of lung irritation and disease. From traffic fumes outdoors to dust and chemicals indoors, harmful particles can damage lung tissue over time. Choosing cleaner transport, ventilating your home, using air purifiers where needed, and avoiding smoky environments all help you breathe easier and protect your lungs.

Be Smoke Free

Smoking is the single biggest risk factor for lung cancer and COPD. Quitting smoking not only adds years to your life but also reduces the risk of disease for those around you exposed to second-hand smoke. Support groups, nicotine replacement therapies, and professional advice can make quitting more achievable.

Where to seek help to quit smoking:

- QuitLine 1800 438 2000
- <https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/IQuit>

Take the Active Option

Physical activity strengthens the lungs by improving their capacity and efficiency. Whether it's brisk walking, swimming, cycling, or light stretching, exercise helps your body use oxygen more effectively. Staying active is beneficial at any age or ability level and supports both lung health and overall wellbeing.

Vaccinate

Respiratory infections such as influenza, pneumonia, and COVID-19 can cause serious complications, especially in vulnerable groups. Vaccination is a safe and effective way to defend your lungs and prevent the spread of illness in the community. Keeping up to date with recommended vaccines is a simple step that saves lives.

Here at Asia HealthPartners, we offer a comprehensive range of vaccinations.



Contact us to find out more about our vaccines available

Fight Climate Change

Climate change affects air quality through rising temperatures, wildfires, and worsening pollution. These changes increase respiratory problems worldwide. By reducing energy waste, supporting clean energy initiatives, and making sustainable choices, we protect not only the planet but also our own lungs and those of future generations.

Eat Well

Nutrition plays an often-overlooked role in lung health. Diets rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fibre support immune function and reduce inflammation. Vitamin D and gut health are increasingly linked to stronger respiratory systems. Eating well strengthens the body's natural defences against lung disease.

Conclusion:

World Lung Day reminds us that healthy lungs are essential for life. Around the globe and in Singapore, lung diseases like asthma, COPD, and lung cancer continue to claim millions of lives, many of which are preventable.

Smoking, second-hand smoke, air pollution, occupational exposures, and family history remain major risk factors, but early detection through screening and healthier lifestyle choices can save lives.

Protecting our lungs is a shared responsibility.

By avoiding tobacco, keeping active, eating well, vaccinating, reducing exposure to pollution, and supporting climate action, we can all contribute to stronger lungs and healthier communities.

On this World Lung Day, let's commit to raising awareness, supporting research, and taking everyday steps that protect our lungs—for ourselves and for future generations.

Useful link:

<https://firsnet.org/world-lung-day-2025/>

<https://www.singaporecancersociety.org.sg/learn-about-cancer/types-of-cancer/lung-cancer.html>

Key points

- Make healthy lifestyle choices.
- Engage with your doctor regularly for your health checks.
- Incorporate health coaching with your family doctor to improve your health and wellness.

Health tips:

Surround yourself in a conducive healthy living environment.

Be mindful of the physical and digital environments you surround yourself in. Spend more time engaging with health seeking behaviour activities and communities to inspire and motivate your fitness journey.

Engage with your doctor and health professionals regularly.

Schedule regular health checks with your doctor, health coach and other health professionals.

Food for thought:

Be thankful for a day to make a difference to your health while you are healthy and safe.

Never take for granted your health when healthy.

Make improvements if you are not.

Develop a healthy relationship with exercise. It is the best thing you can do for yourself.

Do something today that your future self will thank you for.

The best day to start exercising is today.

Final Thoughts:

The next time you have your health screening done, spare a moment to reflect on your lifestyle habits and discuss with your doctor on ways to improve the above towards a better and healthier you and our planet.

‘Towards better health outcomes’

Dr Chrystal Fong provides comprehensive health screening and GP services to suit your individual needs.

We hope to be of service in improving your health and well-being

Schedule an appointment with Dr Chrystal Fong:



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Website: <http://www.asiahealthpartners.com/>

Here at Asia HealthPartners, we offer a comprehensive range of vaccinations.



Contact us to find out more about our vaccines available

About the author:

Dr Chrystal Fong Chern Ying (MBBS Melbourne, FRACGP) is currently practicing as a family physician at Asia HealthPartners under the subsidiary of Singapore Institute of Advanced Medicine (SAM) Holdings, located at Lucky Plaza, Orchard, Singapore.

Dr Chrystal Fong is listed on the editors list of health screening providers on Health365, a healthcare, wellness and aesthetic medicine publishing agency in Asia.

She is featured in the Britishpedia's 6th edition of 'Successful People in Malaysia and Singapore'.

With her interest in lifestyle medicine, medical technology and longevity medicine (Certified), she also takes personal pride in living the lifestyle medicine pillars herself and advocating through her sports communities and social media platforms.

Being certified in Wellness and Behaviour modification with International Sports Academy, her consultations incorporate health coaching methods.

She is a member of the Singapore College of Family Physicians, Singapore Medical Association, Ex-Co member of the Singapore Society of Behavioural Health, member of the Singaporean Society of Lifestyle Medicine, American College of Lifestyle Medicine.

She was awarded a certificate of attendance in recognition of participation in the NUS (National University of Singapore) Yoo Loo Lin School of Medicine DTX HealthSG Leadership Masterclass 2024.

Dr Chrystal's health editorial is featured in June 2025 edition of Millionaire Asia magazine, entitled "'Healing Reimagined' - The 4-pillar framework for Next- generation healthcare".