

## *National Healthy Lung Month*

We often take our lungs for granted. We don't think about how hard they work to keep us breathing all day at our jobs, while we exercise, or at night as we sleep. We only notice our lungs when it becomes too difficult to breathe. Each October we recognize National Healthy Lung Month to increase awareness and education around this very important topic.

To prioritize your lung health, there are several things you can start doing today to take care of them now and for decades to come.

### **Prevent illness.**

As we have all become more aware of during the pandemic, infection and illness puts strain on the respiratory system, including the lungs. To avoid illness that can result in a serious infection, wash your hands regularly, avoid crowds and social distance, wear a mask, and get your flu shot.

### **Exercise regularly.**

Physical exercise doesn't just make your muscles stronger – it makes your lungs stronger too. All adults should aim to be moderately active for a total of 30 minutes a day for five days a week. This could be going on a brisk walk or run, doing yoga or Pilates, or even cleaning your house. You don't have a train like a professional athlete to improve your lung strength!

### **Quit smoking.**

According to the American Cancer Society, lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths in both men and women in the United States, and a staggering 85 percent of the lung cancer deaths are due to tobacco use. While the stress of the pandemic can make it difficult to quit smoking, and

even harder to stick with it, it is the single best thing you can do for your lung health.

If you need help, seek out a local treatment center for more information.

**Get screened.**

Even if you show no signs of lung cancer, it could be life-saving to get screened, as early detection is critical to identifying and beating the disease. In fact, screening for lung cancer using low-dose CT scans can lower the chance of dying from lung cancer by 20 percent, according to the National Lung Cancer Screening Trial.

You should be screened for lung cancer if you are between the ages of 55 and 77, asymptomatic (no signs or symptoms of lung cancer), have a tobacco smoking history of at least 30 pack-years, or are a current smoker or have quit smoking within the last 15 years.

CREDIT: Amy Mansue, President and CEO, Inspira Health

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