

Jared Hagaman: My name is Jared Hagaman. I'm a pulmonary critical care physician at Ephraim McDowell. The vast majority of lung cancer cases are caused by cigarette smoking, about 90%. There's a smaller subset that are caused by exposures to chemicals like radon. And some hereditary forms, but those tend to be very rare.

Unfortunately, there are no signs or symptoms of lung cancer often until it's a very late stage. What you can see is sometimes unexplained cough or coughing up blood. Other times, chest pain or other nonspecific symptoms will occur.

The vast majority of cases are initially found either on chest x-ray or CAT scan of the chest. Ultimately, a biopsy either through bronchoscopy or by what is called a trans thoracic needle biopsy is required to establish a diagnosis.

There are two primary types of lung cancer, non-small cell tumors and small cell tumors. Non-small cell tumors are subdivided into different classes. And then they're also staged, stage one through four. Stage one being the most limited stage, stage four being the most advanced. Small cell cancers are staged in a slightly different way, but in general, staging is less important with small cell cancers.

Surgery is always the primary treatment option if possible. Radiation therapy is also possible and chemotherapy is something that's been used for many years. In recent years, immunotherapy, where medicines are used to trick the immune system to attack tumors have been used successfully and show a lot of promise for the future.

The key to cure for lung cancer is early diagnosis. That's why lung cancer screening is so important so we can diagnose more cancers at early stage when it can be removed either surgically or through radiation therapy.

Lung cancer awareness is very important because again, early diagnosis is the key to survival. So by using lung cancer screening and other tools at our disposal, we can diagnose cancers early.