

A NURSE NAVIGATORS GUIDE THROUGH THE LUNG CANCER ROADMAP

Each patient's journey with lung cancer is unique. As navigators caring for these patients, it is important to offer individualized support. This tool is intended to help guide oncology navigators through the lung cancer patient journey, facilitating effective patient-care team interactions and providing valuable support. This roadmap is not intended to be used as a substitute for the nurse navigator's own professional judgement.

BEGIN



Diagnosis^{2,3}

Diagnosis of lung cancer can include:

- Medical history and physical examination
- Imaging (CT, PET scan, MRI, chest x-ray)
- Pulmonary function test
- Biopsy
- Biomarker testing

Nurse navigator considerations:

- Educate patients on diagnostic procedures (CT/MRI/PET, bronchoscopy, endobronchial ultrasound, CT biopsy, video-assisted thoracoscopic surgery)
- Coordinate appointments for diagnostic testing
- Educate patients on biomarker testing and its role in identifying treatment options; coordinate biomarker testing process
- Assess health, culture, and language literacy

Screening for lung cancer¹

- Adults aged ≥ 50 years with an established ≥ 20 pack-per-year history of smoking cigarettes
- Screen using low-dose computed tomography (LDCT)

Nurse navigator considerations:

- Help determine eligible patients for screening
- Educate patients on screening procedures for LDCT
- Advocate for screening in eligible patients



Staging²

Stage of lung cancer is determined by:

- The size of the primary tumor (T)
- The number of lymph nodes (N) within cancer cells
- If the cancer has spread to other organs or metastasized (M)
- Staging classification indicates the extent of cancer (I, II, III, IV)

Nurse navigator considerations:

- Discuss health-related goals with the patient
- Assess patient's coping and psychosocial skills, provide emotional support, and refer to psychosocial services if necessary at the earliest point possible to assist in patient's participation in shared decision making
- Collaborate with clinical trial navigators, clinical research nurses, and/or oncologists/healthcare providers to identify if the individual is eligible for clinical trial participation
- Establish shared decision-making with the patient and help them understand their diagnosis, treatment recommendations, and expectations of care

MDT involvement³

- A multidisciplinary (MD) approach to lung cancer management involves a wide variety of disciplines with specialized skill in certain areas

Nurse navigator considerations:

- Facilitate referrals to initial consultations
- Provide education on the roles of the multidisciplinary team (MDT)
- Participate in tumor boards as the patient's advocate

Medical treatment plan/management²

Treatment depends on the type and stage of lung cancer, biomarker status, overall health, and patient preferences.

Treatment can include:

- Surgery
- Radiation
- Chemotherapy
- Immunotherapy
- Targeted therapy
- Clinical trials



Nurse navigator considerations

- Ensure patients and families have the correct information to make an informed decision
- Educate patients on the expected therapy timeline and the rationale and importance of adherence to recommended duration of treatment
- Educate patients on common adverse events (AEs) and management strategies, and the importance of promptly reporting AE to the care team
- Perform prompt, frequent assessment of AEs, quality of life, treatment adherence, and barriers to care (eg, logistical, financial, vocational)
- Educate patients on the role of clinical trials and connect patients with a clinical trials nurse navigator and the overarching clinical trials team

Follow-up tests

- CT or MRI scan to assess:
 - Effectiveness of treatment⁴
 - Long-term follow-up to monitor for recurrence or progression²

- MRI to assess for brain metastases

Nurse navigator considerations

- Educate patients on frequency of testing and coordinate appointments
- Assist patients in understanding their disease status
- Recommend support services to manage patient fears of recurrence



Survivorship support/palliative care

- The care team can provide additional support information or resources including:
 - Financial support, returning to work⁵
 - Psychological support⁵
 - Advocacy groups⁵
 - Caregiver and family support⁵
 - Smoking cessation⁶
 - Physician activity⁶
 - Nutritional support⁶
 - Genetic counseling⁵

Nurse navigator considerations

- Refer patients to supportive and palliative resources
- Assess impact of cancer and treatment on patients' goals, treatment adherence, and barriers to care
- Explain the difference between hospice and palliative care



Hospice/end-of-life care

- Appropriate when prognosis is <6 months⁷

Nurse navigator considerations

- Review survivorship care plan, survivorship milestones, surveillance guidelines/follow-up
- Promote advocacy and support resources for families and caregivers
- Provide a point of contact during care transitions



References

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