

# A caregiver's guide

to comprehensive biomarker testing  
for a loved one with lung cancer

「NO ONE」  
MISSED

When your loved one is diagnosed with non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC), you become a crucial part of their journey as their caregiver. A lung cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, and as a caregiver you can play an important role in understanding treatment plans and advocating for your loved one. If your loved one has been diagnosed with NSCLC, it is important to know what comprehensive biomarker testing is and why it's important to be tested at diagnosis and recurrence.

This guide provides information caregivers can use to understand comprehensive biomarker testing and how it is used to inform NSCLC treatment. **Remember, this guide should not replace the advice of a doctor. Talking with your loved one's healthcare team is the best way to understand a lung cancer diagnosis and make shared decisions about treatment.**

## What is biomarker testing?

Not all lung cancers are the same. Comprehensive biomarker testing can help identify specific genetic "drivers" in cancer (called biomarkers) that cause it to grow and spread in different ways.<sup>1</sup> Testing for all recommended biomarkers is essential to this journey because it can help decide on the best treatment for your loved one's unique cancer.



### Why should my loved one have comprehensive biomarker testing?

Testing results provide information on the best treatment for NSCLC, which may or may not include:

- A targeted therapy, or a therapy that targets a specific mutation in a cancer cell.
- Immunotherapy, which enhances the body's immune response and stops the lung cancer from evading the immune system.
- Chemotherapy, which uses drugs to stop the growth and division of tumor cells.

Testing results may also make them eligible for a future treatment option or an available clinical trial.



### Testimonial

"I never expected my wife to be diagnosed with lung cancer and I wanted to make sure we were making an informed decision about her treatment. When we found out about biomarker testing, I knew we had to try it. We found out she was eligible for targeted therapy, and it gave us hope."

**Steve Segura**, East Chicago IN



## How is comprehensive biomarker testing done?

- During biomarker testing, the doctor will either remove part of the tumor or test their blood for biomarkers by sending the sample to a lab to be analyzed.
- The process of obtaining tissue for biomarker testing may involve an invasive procedure causing minor discomfort. Liquid biopsies to obtain biomarker information may be a possibility. Talk to your healthcare provider about what procedures are possible for your individual case.
- It can take 4 weeks or longer to receive results, but it is important to wait for results before beginning treatment.

You or your loved one should ask the healthcare team to perform biomarker testing at any point before making treatment decisions, such as if their cancer returns or if it starts to spread to other parts of the body.

## How can I support my loved one?

Taking on the role as your loved one's caregiver often means becoming an advocate for their care and wellbeing. They may feel overwhelmed with all the information provided to them after a diagnosis—it is important you feel empowered to take notes and ask questions of the healthcare team. Advocating for your loved one can ensure they receive the best care possible for their unique lung cancer.

Comprehensive biomarker testing is not something your loved one has to go through alone. Here are some ways you can support them during the testing process.



### Before testing

- Go with them to an appointment, ask questions (write down your questions ahead of time with your loved one) and take notes of the answers.
- Communicate with your loved one's insurance company to understand the cost of biomarker testing, so they don't have to take that task on alone. Your treatment center may have an insurance or financial specialist who can help you navigate the insurance system.
- Be sure to ask for a Patient Navigator at the oncology office so that they can help guide you and your loved one through local financial, mental, and practical resources.

### Testimonial

**"When my soon-to-be husband was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer at age 29, I knew I needed to be strong for him. So I did my research, and we learned that the results of his comprehensive biomarker test made him eligible for targeted therapy."**

**Emily Huff**, Franklin TN



### During testing

- Take them to and from their biopsy visit.
- After their biopsy, help with any discomfort or possible care they need.





## After testing

- Provide emotional support by talking and listening while your loved one waits for their results.
- Once results are ready, ask their healthcare team to explain the results and how they affect treatment decisions.
- Encourage your loved one to seek a second opinion based on the test results. It is your right and the right of your loved one to get a second opinion and ensure they are receiving the best treatment for their unique cancer.
- Ask for a print or electronic copy of the testing report. This can be helpful for seeking a second opinion.

## Caregivers need support, too

Caregivers play a vital role, but it is important to make sure you are taking care of *yourself* while also helping to take care of your loved one. Here are a few tips you can use to prioritize your physical and mental health.



- **Ask for support.** Caregiving can be emotionally and physically demanding, so don't hesitate to delegate tasks and responsibilities to others when you need a break. You may even create a list ahead of time of those who may be helpful during this time, or of activities you may need help with.
- **Be a source of positivity.** Find time to enjoy activities together that are separate from your loved one's illness and treatment.
- **Find community.** Connect with other caregivers who may understand your situation.
  - Explore **LUNgevity's Caregiver Resource Center** for more information and support resources.
- **Prioritize your health** by eating well, resting, and taking mental health breaks. You can't care for someone else until you take care of yourself.

## Know your biomarkers. Know your options.

To learn more about biomarker testing and to read stories by lung cancer patients and survivors who have experienced comprehensive biomarker testing, visit **NoOneMissed.org**.