



Lung Cancer

Quick Reference Guide

2026

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1 CLINICAL SNAPSHOT

Definition: Lung cancer comprises **non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC, ~80–85% of cases)** and **small cell lung cancer (SCLC, ~10–15%).**¹ Major NSCLC subtypes are **adenocarcinoma** (most common, non-smoker predilection), **squamous cell carcinoma** (smoking-associated, central airways), and **large cell carcinoma** (aggressive, peripheral).¹ Lung cancer is the **leading cause of cancer death** in the United States in both men and women, accounting for more deaths annually than colorectal, breast, and prostate cancers **combined.**¹

ICD-10 Codes:

All primary lung cancers use **C34.xx regardless of histologic type: C34.01** (right main bronchus), **C34.02** (left main bronchus), **C34.11** (right upper lobe), **C34.12** (left upper lobe), **C34.2** (middle lobe; right only), **C34.31** (right lower lobe), **C34.32** (left lower lobe), **C34.81/C34.82** (overlapping sites by side), **C34.91/C34.92** (unspecified part by side), **C34.90** (unspecified; Avoid). **Carcinoid: C7A.090. Metastases TO lung from another primary: C78.00/C78.01/C78.02** = code the originating primary **AND** each lung site **separately.**² **Z85.118** (personal history) applies **ONLY** after complete eradication **and** end of active surveillance.²

Prevalence and Burden: Average age at diagnosis is **70 years**; approximately 70% of NSCLC cases occur in adults aged ≥ 65 years, making lung cancer predominantly a **Medicare-population burden.**^{1,3,4} Approximately **60%** of lung cancers arise in the **right lung**; the right upper lobe is disproportionately affected, comprising **31.2%** of tumors despite representing only **17.6%** of total lung volume.⁵ Cigarette smoking accounts for approximately **85–90%** of US lung cancer cases, with an estimated **85%** of lung cancer deaths in 2025 **directly caused by cigarette smoking.**^{6,7} **LDCT screening** utilization remains critically low: only **~14–18%** of eligible individuals were up to date with screening nationally in 2022, representing the **largest gap in US cancer screening quality.**^{8,9} Major **comorbidity burden** among Medicare beneficiaries with cancer is substantial: diabetes **27%**, COPD **22%**, peripheral vascular disease **14%**, and congestive heart failure **12%.**¹⁰

HCC/RAF V28 Mapping

ICD-10 CODE(S) ²	HCC CATEGORY (V28) ¹¹	RAF (CNA)* ¹²	DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENT ¹³
C34.01–C34.92 (specific subsite + laterality)	HCC 20 Lung and Other Severe Cancers	1.136	Active primary lung malignancy confirmed by pathology or imaging; document specific lobe and laterality from CT and pathology reports
C34.90 (unspecified, unspecified side)	HCC 20 Lung and Other Severe Cancers	1.136	AVOID: highest audit risk in lung cancer coding; Every CT and pathology report specifies lobe and laterality → transcribe into the encounter note to support C34.01–C34.92

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