

## BACKGROUNDER: LUNG CANCER IN B.C. AND CANADA

October 26, 2023

The [2022 Canadian Cancer Statistics](#) report that the most commonly diagnosed cancers (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers) and their respective five-year overall survival (OS) rates in Canada are:<sup>1</sup>

1. Lung: 13% of cases, 22% OS
2. Breast: 12.5% of cases, 89% OS
3. Colorectal: 10% of cases, 67% OS
4. Prostate: 10% cases, 91% OS

In 2022, [the most commonly diagnosed cancers](#) (excluding non-melanoma skin cancers) in British Columbia and the number of people who died from each cancer, were as follows:<sup>2</sup>

- Lung Cancer: 3650 diagnoses, 2650 deaths
- Breast cancer: 3635 diagnoses, 690 deaths
- Prostate cancer: 3600 diagnoses, 670 deaths
- Colorectal cancer: 3150 diagnoses, 1250 deaths

[A 2018 study found that](#) lung cancer accounts for 26.1% of cancer deaths, but receives only 5% of cancer funding. In comparison, breast cancer accounts for 6.7% of deaths, and receives 22.5% of funding.<sup>3</sup>

British Columbia was [the first province to implement a lung cancer screening program](#), in May 2022.<sup>4</sup> BC Cancer Foundation [donors supported start up costs and equipment](#) for this program.<sup>5</sup>

The screening program [targets those deemed at highest risk](#) (over the age of 55 and with a significant tobacco smoking history).<sup>6</sup> However, according to the Canadian Cancer Society, over [one-quarter of lung cancer cases are not related to tobacco smoking](#).<sup>7</sup>

In July 2023, UBC researchers received [a large grant from the Terry Fox Foundation](#) to study the role of air pollution in lung cancer.<sup>8</sup>

In September 2023, the [Canadian Cancer Society also funded a cross-Canada research team](#), including members from UBC, who are assessing non-smoking risk factors to improve screening for lung cancer.<sup>9</sup>

In 2021, the [BC Cancer Foundation announced a transformational donation of \\$15.3 million](#) to advance lung cancer research and care, the largest known philanthropic investment specifically supporting lung cancer.<sup>10</sup>

Sources:

1. 2022 Canadian Cancer Statistics at a Glance  
<https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/cancer-statistics-at-a-glance>
2. 2022 Canadian Cancer Statistics: BC Specific

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3. A.C. Coronada *et al.* "Discrepancies between Canadian cancer research funding and site-specific cancer burden: a spotlight on ten disease sites." *Curr. Oncol.* 2018, 25(5), 338-341; <https://doi.org/10.3747/co.25.4230>
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5. Support from BC Cancer Foundation  
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6. B.C. Screening Program targets "high-risk" category  
<http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/screening/lung/get-screened/who-should-be-screened>
7. Canadian Cancer Society - lung cancer risks  
<https://cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-types/lung/risks>
8. Terry Fox Foundation grant for study on air pollution  
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9. Canadian Cancer Society grant for study on screening non-smokers  
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10. BC Cancer Foundation transformation lung cancer donation  
<https://bccancerfoundation.com/news-and-media/blog/historic/>