

HealthyLiving

CONNECTING WITH OUR PATIENTS AND OUR COMMUNITY

DETECTING LUNG CANCER EARLIER: **How New Robotic Technology Is Changing What's Possible**

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month, a time to bring attention to the importance of early detection, improved diagnosis, and advances in care for this leading cause of cancer death. According to the American Cancer Society, about 226,650 new cases of lung cancer are projected in the U.S. in 2025.



The Challenge of Early Lung Cancer Diagnosis

Early-stage lung cancers are often located deep in the lungs, where standard bronchoscopes have difficulty reaching. More than 70 percent of lung cancers develop in the outer third of the lung, while 64 percent are in the upper lobes, and 51 percent lack a leading airway that can be followed with a bronchoscope.

Oftentimes many early tumors can't be accessed or sampled with traditional tools, delaying diagnosis and treatment. Even short delays—as little as 12 weeks between diagnosis and intervention—are linked with a higher risk of recurrence and worse overall survival.

Conventional bronchoscopy can have a diagnostic yield as low as 30 to 40 percent for small, peripheral lesions. While newer guidance systems like virtual or electromagnetic navigation and radial endobronchial ultrasound have improved outcomes, they still face limitations, especially when the lesion lacks a visible airway path. For patients, this means turning to more invasive procedures such as needle biopsies through the chest wall, which can increase risks like lung collapse (pneumothorax), or surgical biopsies, which can extend recovery times.

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Minimally Invasive Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy

To overcome these diagnostic challenges, Saint Peter's University Hospital now offers Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy, a shape-sensing technology that allows pulmonologists to precisely navigate deep into the lung to reach and biopsy nodules.

The process begins with a high-resolution CT scan that creates a detailed 3D map of the patient's lungs. Using this image, the pulmonologist plots a precise pathway through the breathing tubes to the target lesion.

During this minimally invasive procedure, the pulmonologist uses a thin, guided, flexible catheter through the lung's complex airways.



"The catheter can articulate up to 180 degrees in any direction, maintaining stability as it moves deeper into smaller airways. Real-time navigation feedback ensures accurate positioning, and advanced X-ray imaging can confirm the biopsy tool is exactly where it needs to be," said Amar Bukhari, MD, chief of the Division of Pulmonary,

Critical Care and Sleep Medicine at Saint Peter's University Hospital. "Once in place, the physician can deploy biopsy instruments to collect tissue from the target lesion."

For patients, Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy offers several key advantages:

- **Less invasive:** The procedure is performed through the mouth, without the need for surgical incisions.
- **Lower complication rates:** The risk of lung collapse is significantly lower compared with transthoracic needle biopsy.
- **Faster recovery:** Most patients go home the same day.
- **Faster diagnosis:** Patients will receive treatment earlier when needed.

The Power of Early Detection

When lung cancer is found before it spreads to other parts of the body, patients have far better outcomes. According to the American Cancer Society, the five-year survival rate for localized lung cancer is about 67 percent, compared with 12 percent for cases diagnosed after the disease has spread. Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy helps eliminate delays by giving pulmonologists faster, safer access to hard-to-reach areas of the lung.

"Ion Robotic Bronchoscopy gives our pulmonology team the ability to reach lung nodules that most technologies can only monitor. Now we can intervene earlier, reduce procedural risks, and shorten the patient's path to diagnosis," said Dr. Bukhari.



Take the First Step: Schedule a Low-Dose Lung Cancer Screening

Unfortunately, most lung cancers are detected late because they cause few or no symptoms in the early stages. A low-dose CT (LDCT) scan can detect lung cancer before symptoms appear and when it's most treatable. Saint Peter's offers comprehensive lung cancer screening services using LDCT technology, which uses minimal radiation and takes just minutes to perform.

Eligibility Criteria:

**Adults ages 50 to 80 years old
(or 50 to 77 years old for
Medicare patients)**

**Who have an over 20
pack-year smoking history**
*A pack year is equal to smoking
1 pack (or about 20 cigarettes)
per day for a year. For example, a
person can have a 20 pack-year
history by smoking 1 pack a day for
20 years, or by smoking 2 packs a
day for 10 years.*

**And are a current smoker OR
quit within the past 15 years**

**Speak with your
primary care
provider or
pulmonologist to see
if you are eligible for
a LDCT. If you do not
have a pulmonologist
or want more
information,
contact Saint
Peter's Division
of Pulmonary,
Critical Care and
Sleep Medicine at
732.745.8564.**

Newsweek Names CARES Surgicenter #1 Ambulatory Surgery Center in New Jersey

The CARES Surgicenter, part of Saint Peter's Healthcare System, has been named "Best Ambulatory Surgery Center" in New Jersey by *Newsweek* magazine. This is the sixth time in a row that Saint Peter's CARES Surgicenter has been named to the list of Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers by *Newsweek*.

The Best Ambulatory Surgery Centers 2026 highlights the nation's top ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) based on quality of care, performance data, and peer recommendations relative to in-state competition. ASCs have become an important part of American medicine and offer patients the ability to have specific surgical procedures performed on an outpatient basis, meaning they usually don't require hospitalization. ASCs allow patients to return home on the same day, while also reducing medical costs to patients, as well as hospitals and healthcare systems.



"Earning recognition as the top ambulatory surgical center in New Jersey underscores our commitment to delivering the highest level of care to every patient we serve," said Kevin Nini, MD, surgeon and chairman of the CARES Surgicenter board.

"From preoperative evaluation to recovery, our physicians and staff focus on safety, precision, and an exceptional patient experience, ensuring best practices to provide the best outcomes."

With seven operating rooms and two procedure rooms, the CARES Surgicenter provides high-quality surgical services in a state-of-the-art environment. Patients who choose Saint Peter's CARES Surgicenter are home the very same day. Saint Peter's has over 85 physicians who perform surgeries in the CARES Surgicenter, along with 27 anesthesiologists. The CARES Surgicenter provides pediatric and adult surgical services and has specialized anesthesiologists for both patient populations.

"The continued recognition of the CARES Surgicenter as one of the nation's leading facilities reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care," said Leslie D. Hirsch, FACHE, president and CEO of Saint Peter's Healthcare System.

"This honor is a testament to the dedication, skill, and compassion demonstrated every day by our exceptional surgeons, clinicians, and support staff. Through their expertise, our patients can receive top-of-the-line care in an outpatient surgical center close to home."



The CARES Surgicenter is located at 240 Easton Avenue, across from The Children's Hospital at Saint Peter's University Hospital.

For more information, visit
saintpetershcs.com/CARESSurgicenter



"The continued recognition of the CARES Surgicenter as one of the nation's leading facilities reflects our unwavering commitment to excellence in patient care..."

-Leslie D. Hirsch

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

For more information or to register for a program, call the contact number listed or visit saintpetershcs.com/events. Most programs are FREE unless noted; please call for information.

Cancer Support

Cancer Care
800.813.HOPE (4673)
supportgroup@cancercare.org

Cancer Hope Network
877.467.3638

Crossroads4Hope
908.658.5400

Sister 2 Sister
For Breast Cancer Survivors
732.246.8300

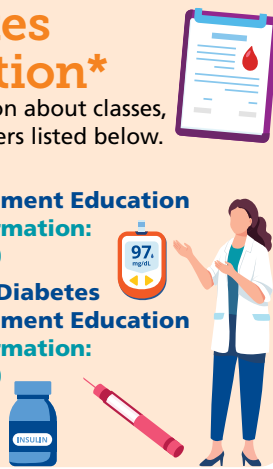


Diabetes Education*

For information about classes, call the numbers listed below.

Diabetes Self-Management Education
Call for information:
732.339.7630

Gestational Diabetes Self-Management Education
Call for information:
732.339.7630



Parent Education

Some parenting classes are being held online. Once registered for a class, access information will be provided to you.

Register at saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation. For information about the following classes, please call Parent Education at 732.745.8579.

Baby Care	Hypnobirthing
Birth Center Class (for moms under midwifery care)	New Daddy Class
Breastfeeding Class	Prenatal Yoga/Exercise Class
Grandparents Class	Prepared Childbirth/Lamaze Classes
	Sibling Class

Parent Support

Registration is required. Visit saintpetershcs.com/ParentEducation or call 732.745.8579.

Breastfeeding Support Group
1st Tuesday of each month
Next meeting: November 4 • 1 pm

New Moms Support Group
"Life Will Never Be The Same"
1st Tuesday of each month
Next meeting: November 4 • 12 pm

Support Groups

Bariatric Nutrition Support

2nd Thursday of each month
Next meeting:
November 13 • 6 – 7 pm
Call 732.339.7450 for Zoom meeting information

Bereavement

Call Pastoral Care for information:
732.745.8565

Craniofacial Teen Girls

Call for information:
732.745.8600, x8113

MyGoal Autism Family

2nd Sunday of each month
Next meeting:
November 9 • 3 pm
Call 877.886.9462 or email info@mygoalautism.org for virtual meeting information

SHARE

3rd Thursday of each month
Next meeting:
November 20 • 7 – 9 pm
Call 732.745.8522 or email imariano@saintpetersuh.com for Zoom link

Spouse/Partner Caregiver Support

Call for information:
732.745.8600, x8653

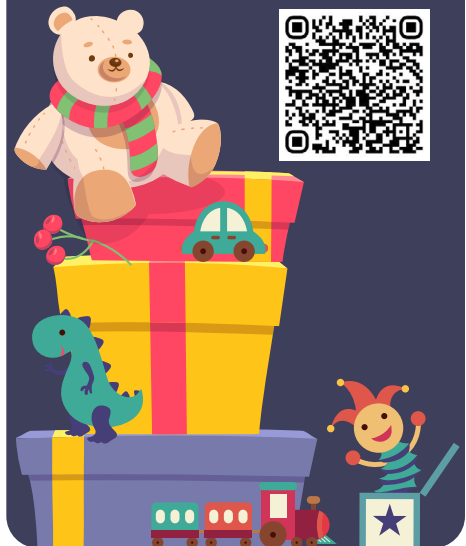
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Saint Peter's Virtual Urgent Care

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Saturday & Sunday • 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For adults experiencing:

- Cold or flu
- Diarrhea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Pink eye
- Rash/skin conditions
- Sinus problems
- Sore throat
- Urinary issues

saintpetershcs.com/virtualurgentcare

Need a doctor? To find a Saint Peter's physician, visit saintpetershcs.com/findaphysician.

Online scheduling is also available with select Saint Peter's Healthcare System physicians via Zocdoc at BookMySPDoc.com

This calendar is for information only. Do not rely on it to make healthcare decisions on your own; instead, talk with your healthcare provider for advice and treatment. Do not ignore medical advice or delay seeking it because of something you read here. We do not suggest or endorse that you have any tests, use products, or use other information in this document without advice from your healthcare provider.



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