

# Lung Cancer Survivorship

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Reed Walton] It's fair to say that most of us don't expect to get cancer. Some people have a family history of cancer or other risk factors, but for lung cancer survivor Jackie Archer, her diagnosis was a complete surprise that would end up changing her, both physically and mentally. I'm Reed Walton from CDC and I'm here to talk with Jackie about living with and surviving lung cancer. Jackie, tell us how you found out you had lung cancer.

[Jackie Archer] About eleven years ago, I was in a car accident and taken to the emergency room. The doctors started tests on me right away, and during a scan they found a mass in my right lung the size of the doctor's fist. Two days later, I was told that I had lung cancer. Without a doubt, the car accident saved my life.

[Reed Walton] Otherwise you might never have known about the cancer.

[Jackie Archer] Exactly. At first, when I got the news, I was wondering if they were talking to the right patient. I had never smoked a day in my life, and my parents never smoked, either.

[Reed Walton] It's true that anyone can get lung cancer. Smoking is the number one cause of lung cancer, and it's also possible for people to get lung cancer from secondhand smoke. There are other, less common causes for lung cancer, like radon, which is a naturally occurring radioactive gas.

[Jackie Archer] Yes, I had my home tested for radon, and it came back negative. But none of these factors could change the fact that I had cancer and I had to deal with it. I had surgery almost immediately, and the doctors removed my right lung and thirty-one lymph nodes. I also had chemotherapy treatments.

[Reed Walton] That must have been tough.

[Jackie Archer] It was. I don't think I could have gotten through it so well without my support network. It was a struggle learning to breathe with just one lung. Some days I could only walk as far as the mailbox, and when I got there I found letters and cards from my friends and family and community.

[Reed Walton] And it's now been over a decade since your diagnosis. How has being a cancer survivor changed you?

[Jackie Archer] Now I know there's no obstacle that I can't handle. Survivorship means taking charge, and part of survivorship is understanding what you have to do to take care of yourself, and working with your doctors as a team.

[Reed Walton] Jackie, what would you like to tell someone who has recently been diagnosed with cancer?

[Jackie Archer] I would say get help immediately; do *not* delay treatment. Ask questions of your doctors. Educate yourself about your condition and treatment. It's up to you to take charge of your health—and fight.

[Reed Walton] Thank you so much. Jackie never smoked, but if you 're a smoker, you should know that quitting *any time* can help lower your risk for many types of cancer. To learn more about lung cancer and cancer survivorship, go to [cdc.gov/cancer](http://cdc.gov/cancer).

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov), or 1-800-CDC-INFO.*