EmergencyKT: Incidental Pulmonary Nodule

If given, it is reasonable to follow the guidelines established in radiology report. It is also reasonable to establish follow up for any nodule, regardless of size/characteristics.

**Definition of Solitary Pulmonary Nodule:**
- Roughly spherical radiographic opacity
- >2/3 border surrounded by lung parenchyma
- Exclude lymph nodes, atelectasis, PNA, effusion
- >3 cm assume malignancy and refer to pulm/onc
- >10 nodules together (>10 more likely to be infectious/transient)
- If greater than 1 nodule (but <10), evaluate largest

**Pulmonary Nodule on Chest X-ray**
- Patient >35 years of age with no PMH malignancy.
- If stable chest x-ray for 2 years – no follow up imaging necessary.
- If chest x-ray changed: obtain non-contrast low dose CT with thins (1-3 mm) through nodule.
- Based on clinical suspicion for lung CA and need to est. dx may be appropriate to obtain ED CT

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**Recommendations for Follow-up and Management of Nodules Smaller than 8 mm Detected Incidentally at Nonscreening CT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NODULE SIZE</th>
<th>LOW- RISK PATIENT</th>
<th>HIGH-RISK PATIENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>= 4 mm</td>
<td>No follow-up needed</td>
<td>CT at 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;4-6 mm</td>
<td>CT at 12 months</td>
<td>If stable, no further follow-up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;6-8 mm</td>
<td>Initial CT at 6-12 months</td>
<td>If stable, repeat CT at 18-24 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;8 mm</td>
<td>CT at 3, 9, and 24 months</td>
<td>CT at 3, 9, and 24 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note – Newly detected indeterminate nodule in persons 35 years of age or older.

1Average length and width
2Minimal or absent history of smoking and of other known risk factors
3History of smoking or of other known risk factors
4The risk of malignancy in this category (<1%) is substantially less than that in the baseline CT scan of an asymptomatic smoker.
5Non-solid (ground-glass) or partly solid nodules may require longer follow-up to exclude indolent adenocarcinoma

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**Fleischner Criteria**

**Pulmonary Nodule on CT**
- *Exclude known malignancy*
- **Patient >35 years of age**

**Solid nodules stable size ≥2 yr negligible malignancy**

- No Follow Up
- Yes
- Stable size in studies >2 years prior?
- No
- Yes (Solid)
- Radiographic appearance solid?
- No
- Yes (Sub-solid)

**Definite referral to pulm/onc >18% malignancy (see chart)**

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**VATs, wedge resection, transthoracic aspirate, bronchoscopy with biopsy based on oncology/surgical evaluation and patient preferences/candidacy**

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**For any patient you may assess malignancy risk % by accessing:**

Sub solid pulm nodules, if malignant, associated with slow growth and 2 yr rule does not apply.

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**References**


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**Figure 2:** SEN size and corresponding likelihood of malignancy. See Figure 1 legend for expansion of abbreviation.