

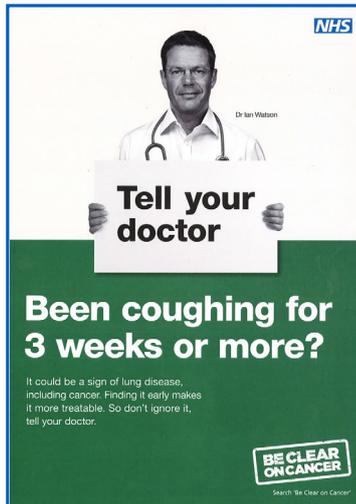
News



South Tyneside Council

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South Tyneside **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



August 25th, 2016

CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGING THOSE WITH A PERSISTENT COUGH, OR WHO GET OUT OF BREATH DOING THINGS THEY USED TO BE ABLE TO DO, TO VISIT THEIR GP

Local people are being encouraged to visit their GP if they have a persistent cough, or get out of breath doing things they used to do like mowing the lawn, as it could be a sign of lung cancer, lung disease or heart disease.

South Tyneside Council along with partners including South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust and South Tyneside NHS Clinical Commissioning Group are supporting the new Be Clear on Cancer respiratory campaign which is running until mid-October.

While the symptoms may well be nothing serious, the Public Health England campaign aimed at men and women aged 50 and over, makes it clear that if you have either of these symptoms you should go to your doctor. Finding these conditions early makes them more treatable.

Latest figures show that in the North East 2,779 people were diagnosed with lung cancer in 2014. In addition, 75,370 people in the region have already been diagnosed, and are living with COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease – a common form of lung disease that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis) and 118,296 with coronary heart disease.

Earlier diagnosis of these diseases has the potential to save lives. For instance, 83% of people diagnosed with lung cancer at the earliest stage (stage 1) will live for at least a year after diagnosis. At the latest stage (stage 4), this drops to 17%. Sadly, in 2014, 2,133 people died from the disease in the North East. Earlier diagnosis can also improve the quality of life of those living with conditions such as COPD.



Dr Jen Hunter, a GP registrar at Central Surgery, Cleadon Park Primary Care Centre, Prince Edward Rd, South Shields who is working on improving cancer outcomes for the CCG, said: "Some people may not realise that a persistent cough or getting out of breath doing everyday tasks that you used to be able to do, such as mowing the lawn or vacuuming, could be a sign of lung cancer or other lung disease. Breathlessness could also be a potential sign of heart disease as well.

"People can delay going to see their GP as they might be fearful of what they may find out, or can even worry that they might be wasting their doctor's time. These symptoms may be nothing to worry about but if it is something serious, the earlier it's checked out, the better the chances of treating it effectively."

Councillor Tracey Dixon, South Tyneside's Lead Member for Independence and Wellbeing, added: "I would urge anyone who has any of these symptoms to make an appointment to see their GP as finding these conditions early makes them more treatable and could save lives. "The figures from the North East show that people need to be more aware of lung cancer and respiratory disease in order that more lives can be saved through early diagnosis. The campaign is a good way of raising awareness and I hope that people take notice of the signs and symptoms and visit their GP sooner rather than later if they are concerned."

Dr Mark Shipley, Consultant Respiratory Physician at South Tyneside District Hospital, said: "Diagnosing lung cancer, lung disease and heart disease early is vital as it makes it more treatable. People should not ignore symptoms, such as getting out of breath doing everyday activities and a cough which lasts three weeks or more, but instead should always tell their doctor. Earlier diagnosis can also help with the management of conditions like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), where prompt diagnosis and treatment will improve quality of life."

The nationwide Be Clear on Cancer campaign will run until October 16. For further information about the signs and symptoms of lung cancer, other lung diseases and heart disease, search 'Be Clear on Cancer'.

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