

GP urges people not to ignore persistent cough



An NHS Lothian GP has stressed the importance of people getting checked if they've had a cough for three weeks or more.

Dr Lorna Porteous urged those who have a persistent cough, or have noticed someone with the symptom, not to delay seeing their GP – stressing that they won't be wasting anyone's time.

The reminder comes on the back of the Scottish Government's Detect Cancer Early (DCE) campaign, fronted by Sir Alex Ferguson, which aims to drive awareness that a cough for three weeks or more could be a sign of lung cancer.

The campaign encourages those with the symptom to get checked by their GP sooner rather than later as the earlier lung cancer is found, the easier it is to treat and the higher the chance of survival.

Since DCE began, the percentage of people diagnosed with Stage I lung cancer has increased by 35.6 per cent.

Recent research highlighted almost two thirds (61 per cent)¹ of adults disagreed that they would put off a trip to the GP for fear of what they might be told. Encouragingly, 88 per cent of adults agree that it's definitely worth getting a cough that isn't clearing up checked by a GP² – a sentiment echoed by Dr Porteous.

Dr Lorna Porteous, GP, NHS Lothian said: "If you've had a cough for three weeks or more, your GP wants to see you.

"It's probably nothing to worry about, but if it's something

that needs treatment, the earlier it's found, the better.

“There's lots that can be done to treat lung cancer these days, with the survival rate almost 20 times higher for those diagnosed at an early stage, than a late stage.

“So don't put off seeing your GP if you have a concern. You won't be wasting anyone's time, we're here to help.”

Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in Scotland. However, thanks to advances in treatment and increased rates of early detection, more people than ever in Scotland are surviving lung cancer – 250 more a year compared to 25 years ago.

Lorraine Dallas, Director of Information & Support, Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation said:

“If someone is worried about lung cancer symptoms, such as a cough that has lasted more than three weeks, it is vital to see their GP. We know that if lung cancer is picked up early your chances of being alive five years later are 20 times better. Lung cancer is treatable, potentially curable, so if you are worried, get checked.”

For more information visit getcheckedearly.org or call Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation on 0800 358 7200.