

IASLC Lung Cancer Staging Project

T, N, and M Descriptors for the 8th edition of the TNM classification of lung cancer

T – Primary Tumor		
Category	Subcategory	Descriptors
TX		Primary tumor cannot be assessed, or tumor proven by the presence of malignant cells in sputum or bronchial washings but not visualized by imaging or bronchoscopy
T0		No evidence of primary tumor
Tis		Carcinoma in situ: Tis(AIS): adenocarcinoma Tis(SCIS): squamous cell carcinoma
T1		Tumor 3 cm or less in greatest dimension, surrounded by lung or visceral pleura, without bronchoscopic evidence of invasion more proximal than the lobar bronchus (i.e., not in the main bronchus). The uncommon superficial spreading tumor of any size with its invasive component limited to the bronchial wall, which may extend proximal to the main bronchus, is also classified as T1a.
	T1mi	Minimally invasive adenocarcinoma
	T1a	Tumor 1 cm or less in greatest dimension
	T1b	Tumor more than 1 cm but not more than 2 cm in greatest dimension
	T1c	Tumor more than 2 cm but not more than 3 cm in greatest dimension
T2		Tumor more than 3 cm but not more than 5 cm; or tumor with <i>any</i> of the following features. T2 tumors with these features are classified T2a if 4 cm or less, or if size cannot be determined; and T2b if greater than 4 cm but not larger than 5 cm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves main bronchus regardless of distance to the carina, but without involving the carina • Invades visceral pleura • Associated with atelectasis or obstructive pneumonitis that extends to the hilar region, either involving part of the lung or the entire lung
	T2a	Tumor more than 3 cm but not more than 4 cm in greatest dimension
	T2b	Tumor more than 4 cm but not more than 5 cm in greatest dimension
T3		Tumor more than 5 cm but not more than 7 cm in greatest dimension or one that directly invades any of the following: parietal pleura (PL3), chest wall (including superior sulcus tumours), phrenic nerve, parietal pericardium; or associated separate tumor nodule(s) in the same lobe as the primary
T4		Tumors more than 7 cm or one that invades any of the following: diaphragm, mediastinum, heart, great vessels, trachea, recurrent laryngeal nerve, esophagus, vertebral body, carina; separate tumor nodule(s) in a different ipsilateral lobe to that of the primary

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N – Regional Lymph Nodes		
NX		Regional lymph nodes cannot be assessed
N0		No regional lymph node metastasis
N1		Metastasis in ipsilateral peribronchial and/or ipsilateral hilar lymph nodes and intrapulmonary nodes, including involvement by direct extension
N2		Metastasis in ipsilateral mediastinal and/or subcarinal lymph node(s)
N3		Metastasis in contralateral mediastinal, contralateral hilar, ipsilateral or contralateral scalene, or supraclavicular lymph node(s)
M- Distant Metastasis		
M0		No distant metastasis
M1		Distant metastasis
	M1a	Separate tumor nodule(s) in a contralateral lobe; tumor with pleural nodules or malignant pleural or pericardial effusion. Most pleural (pericardial) effusions with lung cancer are due to tumor. In a few patients, however, multiple microscopic examinations of pleural (pericardial) fluid are negative for tumor, and the fluid is non-bloody and is not an exudate. Where these elements and clinical judgment dictate that the effusion is not related to the tumor, the effusion should be excluded as a staging descriptor.
	M1b	Single extrathoracic metastasis in a single organ and involvement of a single distant (non-regional) node
	M1c	Multiple extrathoracic metastases in one or several organs

Besides the descriptor 'tumor size', it should be indicated that, for part-solid tumors, the size of the solid component on CT and the size of the invasive component at pathologic examination are the ones to be used to define the T category based on tumor size.