

Can a simple breath test detect cancer?

Researchers want to find out if signals of different cancer types can be picked up in patterns of breath molecules. The Cancer Research UK team in Cambridge will collect breath samples from 1,500 people, some with cancer.

If the technology is proven, the hope is that breath tests could be used in GP practices to decide if patients need to be referred for more tests. They could potentially be used alongside blood and urine tests to help doctors detect cancer at an early stage, the researchers said.

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Molecules called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are released when cells in the body carry out biochemical reactions as part of their behaviour. But if cancer or other conditions are present, the normal behaviour of cells is altered and they appear to produce a different pattern of molecules – and a different signature smell.

The research team is trying to find out if this pattern or odour can be identified in people's breath, using breath biopsy technology. Their ultimate aim is to work out if different types of cancer produce different patterns – or signatures – which can be detected at an early stage.

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In short, there is a long way to go and much more research needed on more people before a breath test will be appearing in any GP surgeries.

Read full, original post: [Is a breath test key to detecting cancer?](#)