A 2015 study by the National Cancer Institute shows that a blood test some call a "liquid biopsy" can detect cancer cells in a patient's blood and help gauge if a patient's treatment is working. The test is significantly less invasive than a regular biopsy and is considered a potentially major breakthrough in the fight against cancer.

### Keywords
Cancer, Blood Test, Liquid Biopsy, Cancer Cells, Chemotherapy, Treatment, Noninvasive, Scans, Biopsies, Biopsy, Mary Susan Sabini, Lung Cancer, Lung, Chemo, David Hyman, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, National Cancer Institute, Study, Tumors, DNA, Bloodstream, Detection, Colon Cancer, Blood Cancer, Lymphoma, Health, Biotechnology, Research

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"New "Liquid Biopsy" Blood Test Shows Promise in Cancer Fight." Rehema Ellis, correspondent. *NBC*
Transcript

New Liquid Biopsy Blood Test Shows Promise in Cancer Fight

LESTER HOLT, anchor:

For patients in the fight against cancer, the wait to find out if the treatment they're getting is actually working can be an excruciating process—undergoing scans or painful surgical biopsies. And that's precisely what makes a new cancer blood test such welcome news. NBC's Rehema Ellis has our report.

REHEMA ELLIS, reporting:

Diagnosed with lung cancer four years ago Mary Susan Sabini knew something was wrong when training for a marathon. A non-smoker she had a cough she couldn't get rid of.

MARY SUSAN SABINI: It's very scary when you hear that you have a-- a diagnosis.

ELLIS: And even scarier wondering if her chemotherapy is working or should doctors try something else. Now this 55-year-old elementary schoolteacher benefits from an extraordinary new blood test that some are calling a liquid biopsy.

SABINI: Because it's noninvasive, you can do it every three weeks, and you get confirmation that your treatment is working.

ELLIS: How does it actually work?

DR. DAVID HYMAN (Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center): When tumors are in a patient's body, they-- small amounts of them die and they shed DNA into the bloodstream and we now have very sensitive techniques for detecting those shards of DNA.

ELLIS: The study, so far, have been small and limited to particular cancers, including lung, colon, and blood cancer. Still, doctors are encouraged. A new study published this month involved only 126 lymphoma patients, but it found that the blood biopsy could detect cancer coming back more than three months before they were noticeable on CT scans.

DR. HYMAN: I think it's a potentially major diagnostic breakthrough for our patients.

ELLIS: And the goal one day for families and patients—a blood test detecting cancer cells even before they become a tumor. Rehema Ellis, NBC News, New York.