

Serious Illnesses Resources

Pulmonary Illnesses

Pulmonary Illnesses is a type of disease that affects the lungs and other parts of the respiratory system. Pulmonary diseases may be caused by infection, by smoking tobacco, or by breathing in secondhand tobacco smoke, radon, asbestos, or other forms of air pollution.

The Top 8 Respiratory Illnesses and Diseases ([Unity Point Health](#))

- Asthma
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Cystic Fibrosis/Bronchiectasis
- Emphysema
- Lung Cancer
- Pleural Effusion
- Pneumonia

What are the early signs of lung disease?

- Trouble breathing.
- Shortness of breath.
- Feeling like you are not getting enough air.
- Decreased ability to exercise.
- A cough that will not go away.
- Coughing up blood or mucus.
- Pain or discomfort when breathing in or out.

Ways to Assist in Clearing the lungs

Steam therapy, or steam inhalation, involves inhaling water vapor to open the airways and help the lungs drain mucus, exercise, green tea, anti-inflammatory foods, and chest percussion.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) ([Mayo Clinic](#))

A group of lung diseases that block airflow and make it difficult to breathe. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are the most common conditions that make up COPD. Damage to the lungs from COPD cannot be reversed. It is a common lung disease. Having COPD makes it hard to breathe. Symptoms include shortness of breath, wheezing, or a chronic cough.

Risk Factors: Exposure to air pollution, breathing secondhand smoke, working with chemicals, dust and fumes, and history of childhood respiratory infection.

Asthma

A lung disease that makes it harder to move air in and out of your lungs, overtime. Symptoms include shortness of breath, wheezing, or a chronic cough. Rescue inhalers and inhaled or oral steroids can help control symptoms and minimize further damage.

Chronic bronchitis

A contagious viral infection that causes inflammation of the bronchial tubes. The bronchial tubes are the airways that carry air into your lungs. When these tubes get infected, they swell. Mucus (thick fluid) forms inside them. This narrows the airways, making it harder for you to breathe.

Additional Help and Resources

The International Primary Care
Respiratory Group (IPCRG)

Women's Health

UnityPoint Health.

US National Library of Medicine

National Cancer Institute

American Lung Association

Serious Illnesses Resources

Pulmonary Illnesses (Contd.)

Lung Cancer

Causes of lung cancer include smoking, secondhand smoke, exposure to certain toxins, and family history. Symptoms include cough (often with blood), chest pain, wheezing, and weight loss. These symptoms often do not appear until the cancer is advanced.

Cystic Fibrosis/Bronchiectasis

Bronchiectasis refers to dilatation of the bronchi that is usually permanent and is associated with a clinical syndrome of cough, mucus production and recurrent respiratory infections. It can be caused by a range of inherited and acquired disorders. The most well recognized inherited disorder in Western countries is cystic fibrosis (CF), an autosomal recessive condition that leads to progressive bronchiectasis, bacterial infection, and premature mortality.

Pleural Effusion

An abnormal collection of fluid between the thin layers of tissue (pleura) lining the lung and the wall of the chest cavity

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is a common lung infection caused by germs, such as bacteria, viruses, and fungi. It can be a complication of the flu, but other viruses, bacteria and even fungi can cause pneumonia.

Emphysema

A disorder affecting the alveoli (tiny air sacs) of the lungs. The transfer of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the lungs takes place in the walls of the alveoli. In emphysema, the alveoli become abnormally inflated, damaging their walls, and making it harder to breathe. People who smoke or have chronic bronchitis have an increased risk of emphysema. Emphysema is a type of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

Helpful Links

[The International Primary Care Respiratory Group \(IPCRG\)](#)

[Women's Health](#)

[UnityPoint Health](#)

[US National Library of Medicine](#)

[National Cancer Institute](#)

[American Lung Association](#)