

Pulmonary Fibrosis



Pulmonary fibrosis is a group of diseases of the lower respiratory system. The lung tissue becomes scarred and thick with pulmonary fibrosis. The scar tissue in the lungs limits the transfer of oxygen from air to blood. This leads to shortness of breath.

Causes

Pulmonary fibrosis can be the result of exposure to dusts, gases, fumes, or vapors. Some medications, radiation, and certain lung infections can lead to pulmonary fibrosis. Some occupations can lead to an increased risk for pulmonary fibrosis, such as coal miners and cotton farmers. For some persons with pulmonary fibrosis, the cause is not known. Smoking or being around people who are smokers, increases the risk.

Symptoms

- Shortness of breath at rest that lasts for months
- Cough
- Chest pain
- Decrease in activity level
- Changes in finger nails or enlarged finger tips, called clubbing
- Flu-like symptoms

Treatment

Treatment will depend on the cause of the disease, but may include:

- Using oxygen
- Limiting exposure to smoke and other irritants
- Learning to relax and manage stress
- Breathing exercises
- Preventing respiratory infections
- Taking medicines
- Lung transplant

If you would like more written information, please call the Library for Health Information at (614)293-3707. You can also make the request by e-mail: health-info@osu.edu.

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