



Pulmonary Hypertension

What is Pulmonary Hypertension?

This is a type of high blood pressure that affects the arteries in your lungs and the right side of your heart. The signs and symptoms of pulmonary hypertension develop slowly. You may not notice them for months or even years. Symptoms get worse as the disease progresses.



Pulmonary Hypertension



Normal Heart

The blood vessels in your lungs are narrowed, blocked, or destroyed. The damage slows blood flow through your lungs, and blood pressure in the lung arteries rises. Your heart must work harder to pump blood through your lungs.

Diagnosis

Your physician may recommend tests and procedures to diagnose pulmonary hypertension and discover its cause and severity. Common diagnostic tests include an echocardiogram, chest X-ray, electrocardiogram (EKG) and catheterization of the right heart. Discovering the underlying cause may involve a chest CT scan, chest MRI, lung function tests, polysomnogram (PSG), lung ventilation/perfusion scan and blood tests.



Treatment

What are the risk factors?

- ❖ Family history
- ❖ Being overweight
- ❖ Blood clotting disorder
- ❖ Exposure to asbestos
- ❖ Genetic disorders
- ❖ Living at high altitudes
- ❖ Use of certain weight loss drugs
- ❖ Use of illegal drugs
- ❖ Use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs)

Pulmonary hypertension ***cannot be cured***, but treatments can reduce your symptoms and help you manage your condition. If the cause is identified and treated early, it may be possible to prevent permanent damage to your pulmonary arteries, which are the blood vessels that supply your lungs. The most common treatment is medications that you must take every day and adhere to a strict regime.

Lifestyle Changes

- ❖ **Quit Smoking:** Your doctor can recommend programs and products to help.
- ❖ **Follow a Healthy Diet:** Eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, plus lean meat, poultry, fish and low-fat/fat-free milk. Your diet should be low in fat, cholesterol, sodium and sugar.
- ❖ **Watch Your Weight:** A daily record of your weight can help you be aware of rapid weight gain, which may be a sign that your pulmonary hypertension is worsening.
- ❖ **Stay active:** Incorporate physical activity such as walking into your lifestyle. Discuss the level of activity with your doctor. Avoid straining or lifting heavy weights. Rest when you need to.
- ❖ **Avoid:** Sitting in a hot tub or sauna, or taking long baths, which will lower your blood pressure.
- ❖ **High Altitudes:** Be cautious about air travel or high-altitude locales. You may need to travel with extra oxygen.