



## Pulmonary Hypertension



# high blood pressure in your lungs

Pulmonary hypertension means you have high blood pressure in your lungs. In people who have congenital heart disease, it can be caused by too much blood flow to the lungs or problems with the lungs themselves.

### How Your Doctor Will Confirm You Have it

The best way to measure the pressure in the lungs is by a heart catheterization. During this procedure, the doctor will insert a small tube (catheter) into a vein in your groin or neck. He or she will guide the wire to your heart and lung arteries where measurements can be taken to see if you have high lung pressure.

### How to Treat High Pulmonary Hypertension

Finding the cause of high blood pressure in your lungs is important to plan your treatment.

- If the problem involves a heart defect, you may need surgery or a catheter-based procedure to repair it. This should relieve the higher lung pressure.
- If your lungs are exposed to high pressures over a long period of time, it can cause permanent damage. This is called Eisenmenger's syndrome.

Pulmonary hypertension is when the blood pressure in your lungs is higher than normal. Normal lung pressure should be less than 25 mmHg.

About 1 in 10 adults born with a heart defect will develop pulmonary hypertension.

If you have chronic (long-term) high blood pressure in your lungs, medicines can help improve how well your lungs work. The medicines may help you feel better but are not a cure.

## What Else Can Make Pulmonary Hypertension Worse

There are some things that can make your pulmonary hypertension worse: obesity, sleep apnea, thyroid problems, infections, severe anemia, smoking, and drugs (such as stimulants and diet pills). Treating these problems may help improve pulmonary hypertension.

Be honest about your health and lifestyle choices when you talk with members of your adult congenital heart disease (ACHD) team so they can help you.

## Talk With Your ACHD Team About Medicine

There are many options for treating pulmonary hypertension, including different kinds of medicines and oxygen.

Medicines used to treat pulmonary hypertension need to be closely monitored.

Talk with your ACHD team about treatment options that may help you feel better.

## Talk With Your ACHD Team About Exercise

- Exercise should be tailored to your heart. Talk with your ACHD team before you start an exercise program.
- If you have pulmonary hypertension, you may need to limit your exercise to walking, biking, swimming, bowling or golfing. Avoid heavy weight lifting as it can cause a dangerous increase in your blood pressure. Lifting lighter weights at higher reps is safer.
- If you have life-threatening arrhythmia: do not exercise.



## Associated Symptoms

Symptoms caused by high blood pressure in your lungs include:

- shortness of breath
- fatigue (feel very tired)
- dizziness or passing out
- palpitations
- chest pain
- swelling.

