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The PULMONARY HYPERTENSION CENTER at NEW YORK METHODIST HOSPITAL

Department of Medicine
Division of Pulmonary
& Critical Care Medicine

Patient Information

Member
NewYork-Presbyterian Healthcare System
Affiliate: Weill Cornell Medical College



What is pulmonary hypertension?

Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a rare but serious disease that causes high blood pressure in the lungs. The arteries leading from the heart to the lungs are narrowed. This makes it harder for the heart to pump blood through the lungs. The increased stress on the heart can eventually lead to heart failure and death.

What causes pulmonary hypertension?

There is no one specific cause; however there are many diseases associated with PH. Some of these are:

- Left heart disease
- Connective tissue disease such as scleroderma and lupus
- Sickle cell disease
- Congenital heart disease
- Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)
- Respiratory diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and pulmonary fibrosis
- Drugs (amphetamines)

How do I know if I have pulmonary hypertension?

Signs and symptoms of PH include shortness of breath after walking short distances or when climbing stairs, dizziness or chest pain and fatigue.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, speak with your doctor.

How is pulmonary hypertension diagnosed?

Patients who have symptoms of, or who may be at risk for, PH should have an echocardiogram (ultrasound of the heart). If this test shows that the right side of the heart is working hard then the patient may have a right heart catheterization. A right heart catheterization is a test that directly measures the pressure in the right side of the heart and pulmonary arteries. If the right heart catheterization shows that these pressures are high, the patient is given the diagnosis of pulmonary hypertension.

Is there a cure for pulmonary hypertension?

PH cannot usually be cured, but there have been many new advances in medications that slow the progression of the disease and/or bring symptomatic relief. Medication options depend on the stage of the disease:

- Oral medications are available for mild to moderate PH
- Inhaled medications are available for moderate to severe PH
- 24 hour infused medications through the skin or permanent IV lines may be used for severe PH
- Some patients may eventually become candidates for lung transplantation

New York Methodist Hospital's Pulmonary Hypertension Center offers a multidisciplinary approach:

- A weekly dedicated PH clinic makes it easy to obtain appointments.
- A nurse who specializes in the care of PH patients is available to help patients with questions, problems and obtaining medications.
- Diagnostic tests are performed on-site.
- Cardiology, hematology, and rheumatology consultations are available to help manage diseases associated with PH.



For more information,
please call the
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