



Pulmonary fibrosis

What causes pulmonary fibrosis?

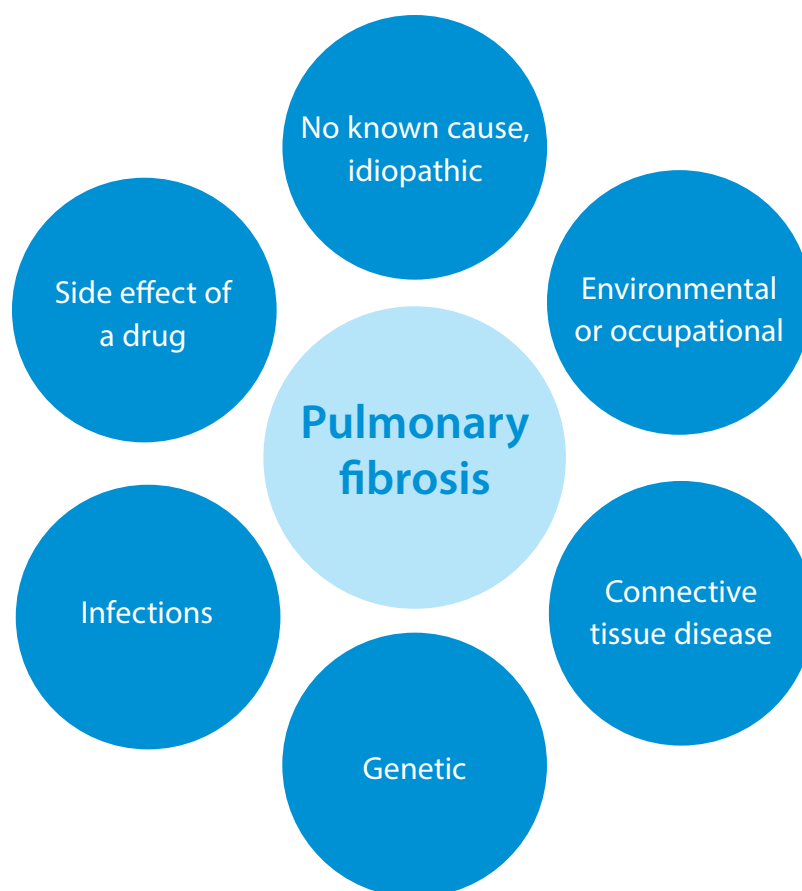
In most types of pulmonary fibrosis a specific cause cannot be found.

One of the commoner types is idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). The word 'idiopathic' means there is no known cause.

In a few cases, it's possible to identify a specific cause, such as:

- » being exposed to certain types of dust - including wood or metal dusts or asbestos
- » being exposed to allergens carried in the air - such as bird feathers or mould
- » a side effect of a drug

There are lots of different types of pulmonary fibrosis, with different causes, but often no known cause.



Some types of pulmonary fibrosis are more likely to occur when you have another condition such as rheumatoid arthritis or scleroderma. These are sometimes called connective tissue disease related ILDs or CT-ILD.

In a very few cases, two or more members of a family may develop pulmonary fibrosis. There are many complex ways in which it's possible to inherit a tendency to pulmonary fibrosis, and not all are well understood. Current UK data sets suggest that less than 10% of people with pulmonary fibrosis have inheritable disease. Genetic testing isn't routinely available for people with pulmonary fibrosis. But there are some rare but well-known inheritable conditions that cause pulmonary fibrosis, such as dyskeratosis congenita. If you or a family member has one then you may be offered genetic screening.

Smoking can cause some very specific kinds of pulmonary fibrosis such as desquamative interstitial pneumonia and respiratory bronchiolitis-interstitial lung disease.

Get in touch with us to find support near you.

Helpline: 03000 030 555

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

Ringing our helpline never costs more than a local call and is usually free, even from a mobile.

helpline@blf.org.uk

[blf.org.uk](https://www.blf.org.uk)

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We value feedback on our information. To let us know your views, and for the most up to date version of this information and references, call the helpline or visit **[blf.org.uk](https://www.blf.org.uk)**

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