

Pulmonary fibrosis associated with connective tissue and autoimmune diseases



For reasons that we don't understand fully, sometimes the immune system turns against the body. This is known as **autoimmune disease**. When your immune system attacks your body's own connective tissues, they scar.

Connective tissues lie under the surface of your skin and around your internal organs and blood vessels. If autoimmune diseases, including rheumatoid arthritis, Sjögrens syndrome and scleroderma, affect your lungs, it can cause pulmonary fibrosis. Unfortunately some of the drugs used to treat these diseases can also cause interstitial lung disease as a side effect.

Symptoms

It's difficult to say what course your lung disease will take because this depends on many factors, including the particular form of autoimmune disease you have, how severe it is and the way it is affecting your lungs. Some people live just a few years after their diagnosis. But other people survive much longer. Talk to your doctor about your individual situation.

If you or your family are facing an emotional time, call our helpline for confidential one-to-one advice and support from our dedicated team.

Treatment

In addition to treatment of your lung symptoms, the best possible management of your underlying condition is essential to protect your lungs from more damage. You'll usually be treated with immunosuppressant drugs tailored to your specific condition.

Further information

You can find more information about pulmonary fibrosis in the following downloads:

- *Pulmonary fibrosis – What it is and how it affects your breathing*
- *Pulmonary fibrosis – Diagnosis and tests*
- *Pulmonary fibrosis – Treatment and support*

Get in touch with us to find support near you.

Helpline: **03000 030 555**

Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm

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

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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**