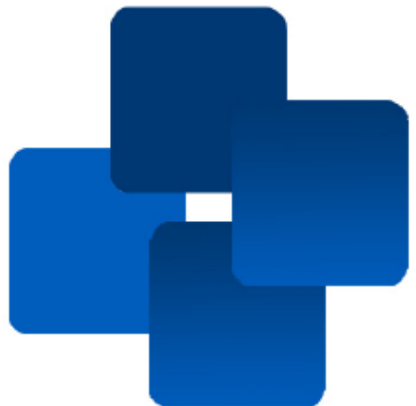
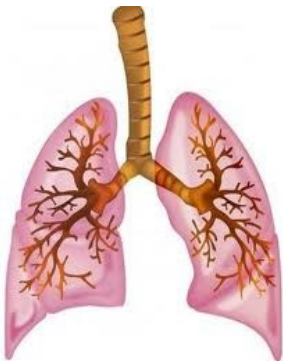


## **Patient Information**

# **Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD)**

Respiratory Department



## Introduction

Interstitial Lung Disease (**ILD**) is an umbrella term that covers many different lung conditions.

**Interstitial** means the disease affects the interstitium, the lace-like network of tissue that supports the alveoli (air sacs) in your lungs.

When you have ILD, there will be inflammation and/or scar tissue build up in your lungs. This build-up of scar tissue, which makes your lungs stiff, is called **fibrosis**.

## What causes ILD?

There are more than 200 different ILDs. For some ILDs the cause can be identified, but for many a definite cause is not known (these are called **idiopathic**). Whilst not all causes are known, we do know:

- it is **not** cancer;
- it is **not** a form of cystic fibrosis;
- it is **not** contagious - other people cannot catch it.

## Known causes of some ILDs include:

- being secondary to another condition, e.g. rheumatoid arthritis;
- infection, such as Epstein - Barr virus (EBV);
- as a result of drug therapy, e.g. methotrexate;
- exposure to certain types of dust, e.g. wood, metal, asbestos;
- being exposed to certain allergens, such as bird feathers, droppings, or mould.

## The most common ILD diagnosed are:

- Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (**IPF**), also known as 'Cryptogenic Fibrosing Alveolitis (CFA)' or 'Usual Interstitial Pneumonitis (UIP)'.
- Collagen Vascular associated Disease (**CVA-ILD**).
- Extrinsic Allergic Alveolitis (**EAA-ILD**), also known as hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP) - bird fancier's lung or farmer's lung.
- Sarcoidosis.

All types of pulmonary fibrosis are rare.

## What are the symptoms of ILD?

The different types of ILD have similar symptoms which may include:

- **Breathlessness** - especially when moving
- **Feeling tired** all of the time
- **Persistent cough** that does not go away
- **Clubbing** - when the shape of the end of fingers (and toes) become rounded and bulbous, and the nails curve over them.

Additional symptoms might be muscle and joint pain, fever, weight loss and indigestion/ heartburn.

## Tests and diagnosis

The treatment for different types of pulmonary fibrosis vary so it is important to identify the cause of your symptoms as it will influence the choice of treatment.

Your doctor will ask questions about your work and medical history, listen to your chest and order blood tests to rule out initial causes. Other tests (although you may not need them all) may include:

- **Breathing tests** - known as lung function tests. This involves breathing into a machine via a tube and shows how your lungs and breathing have been affected
- **Chest X-ray**
- **CT scan** - to give very detailed images of your lungs
- **Biopsy** - collection of tissue and/or lung cells to be examined. This could be done by either a bronchoscopy or surgery (video assisted thoroscopy)

**Treatment** - This varies with each condition and can include:

- **Medication** - Inflammatory ILDs respond to steroids whereas fibrotic changes may not. Anti-fibrotic therapy may be considered to slow the progression of scarring in certain patients. You might be offered medications to help with the symptoms of your ILD, such as feeling short of breath.
- **Pulmonary rehabilitation** - An important part of treatment and includes an exercise programme and advice on keeping your lungs healthy and coping with breathlessness.
- **Oxygen** - If your blood oxygen levels fall too low you can feel more breathless. You may be referred for oxygen assessment, which could be either at home or in a clinic.

**Acute exacerbation** - This is a sudden flare up of your condition, which has otherwise been stable. You will be given advice how to manage your exacerbations.

**If you feel unwell:**

## Further information

For support and advice you can contact the Respiratory nurse team at the Lister Hospital:

**☎ 01438 285621**

Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm

## Useful telephone numbers



**British Lung Foundation**

Helpline ☎ **03000 030 555**

Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm.

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

## Breathe Easy Support Group



To find your nearest support group contact the British Lung Foundation on the number above.

## East and North Herts ILD Support Group

For further information, please call the Pulmonary Rehabilitation Team on ☎ **01462 478783**

## Age UK Hertfordshire

Information and Advice Line ☎ **0300 345 3446**

[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

[www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.enherts-tr.nhs.uk)

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