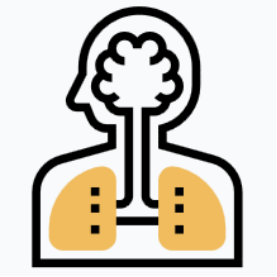
Tan Tock Seng HOSPITAL

Department of
Respiratory & Critical Care Medicine

Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis (IPF)

Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis

What is Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis?



Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is a progressive lung condition which causes scarring of the tissues (fibrosis) around the air sacs in the lungs. This scarring reduces the efficiency of oxygen and carbon dioxide exchange within the lungs and causes difficulties in breathing.

Who is Likely to Get IPF?

The exact cause of IPF is unknown. However, the risk of IPF is greater for:

- People who smoke or used to smoke
- People who are above the age of 50 years old
- Members of the same family (occasionally)

What are the Symptoms of IPF?

In the early stages of IPF, patients may experience mild or no symptoms. However, symptoms may worsen with increased scarring of the lungs.

Symptoms of IPF are not unique to this disease. While the symptoms may be different for each IPF patient, common symptoms associated with IPF include:

- Breathlessness, particularly when climbing up the stairs or walking uphill
- Persistent dry cough
- Tiredness

How is IPF Diagnosed?

Your doctor may ask you about your existing medical conditions, medications and occupation. He or she may also check for abnormal breathing sounds using a stethoscope.

If you are suspected of having IPF, the following tests may be done:

Blood Test

To exclude other possible causes of lung scarring

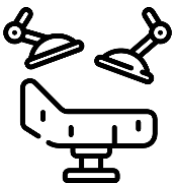
Breathing/ Lung Function Test

To measure how well your lungs are working

Computer Tomography (CT) Scan

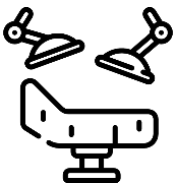
To obtain a detailed imaging of your chest

Bronchoscopy



To obtain cell samples from your lungs

Lung Biopsy



To obtain tissue samples from your lungs

How is IPF Treated?

Your can play your part through the following:

1. Quit smoking to prevent further damage to your lungs and ensure the effectiveness of your medications.

2. Attend pulmonary rehabilitation sessions to learn how to manage your symptoms and improve your physical strength.

3. Stay active and healthy by working out, eating well, and maintaining social activities and hobbies.

4. Get vaccinated to prevent infections from affecting your lungs.

5. Seek help if you are facing emotional or financial difficulties. Speak to your doctor for referrals to support services (e.g. medical social workers).

How is IPF Treated?

Your doctor may prescribe the following treatments:

1. Medications that may help slow down lung damage:
   - Nintedanib
   - Pirfenidone

2. Oxygen therapy to be used when you are feeling breathless, or throughout the day, depending on your condition.

3. Lung transplantation to replace one or both of your lungs with a healthy one from a donor. If this is an option, you will be referred to a transplant centre for evaluation.

Palliative Care and Advanced Care Planning

Palliative care is care for patients with moderate to severe symptoms that significantly affect their well-being.

Palliative care aims to improve a patient's quality of life by managing their symptoms such as breathlessness, cough and fatigue. This will allow people to continue leading meaningful lives and it also provides support to family members and caregivers.

Depending on your condition, your doctor may refer you to a multi-disciplinary team that specialises in providing palliative care.

Advanced Care Planning (ACP) involves discussing your personal values, beliefs, and care preferences with your family and healthcare professionals. ACP allows you to give instructions regarding the type of treatment you may or may not want, should you face a critical illness. It would relieve your family members from making difficult decisions for you, should you encounter a medical emergency.

To find out more about ACP, speak to your doctor or scan the QR code at the back of this booklet.

Brought to you by the Department of Respiratory & Critical Care Medicine, with inputs from Department of Pharmacy.

This information is updated and accurate as of July 2020.

This information is for educational purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for the professional medical advice or treatment.

Clinics 4A & 4B
TTSH Medical Centre, Level 4
Contact:
6357 7000 (Central Hotline)

Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit http://bit.ly/TTSHHealth-Library

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Tan Tock Seng HOSPITAL
National Healthcare Group

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