Pleurisy

Your healthcare provider has told you that you have pleurisy. Read on to learn more about pleurisy and how it can be treated.

**What Is Pleurisy?**

Pleurisy occurs when the tissue (pleura) that lines the lungs and chest becomes inflamed. The pleura is made up of two layers of thin, smooth tissue that surround the lungs and line the inside of the chest. The pleura helps protect the lungs. Normally, the two layers glide smoothly past each other when you breathe in and out. With pleurisy, the layers become swollen and inflamed. This causes them to rub together with each breath, making it painful to breathe. Pleurisy can occur for many reasons. Some causes include lung infections (such as pneumonia), lung cancer, and injury to the chest.

**How Is Pleurisy Diagnosed?**

Your healthcare provider examines you and asks you about your health history. Samples of blood may be taken for testing. Imaging tests, such as a chest x-ray, CT scan, or ultrasound may be done to take detailed images of the inside of the body. Other tests may also be done. Your healthcare provider will tell you more if needed.

**How Is Pleurisy Treated?**

Treatment may depend on the cause. For instance, if you have a bacterial infection, antibiotics will be given. Your symptoms can also be treated so you are more comfortable. You may be given pain medications. You may also receive medications to reduce inflammation, such as ibuprofen or aspirin. Your healthcare provider can tell you more about your treatment options.

**What Are the Long-term Concerns?**

With treatment, pleurisy is often cured. Untreated, it can lead to problems such as a condition called pleural effusion. This occurs when fluid collects in the pleural space. This is the area between the layers of the pleura. Pleural effusion can cause further health problems. This may require having procedures or taking medications for months or years. This is why the cause of your pleurisy needs to be investigated and treated as soon as possible. Your healthcare provider can tell you more, if needed.

*Call the healthcare provider right away if you have any of the following:*

- Severe trouble breathing (call 911)
- Severe chest pain (call 911)
- Skin turns blue (call 911)
- Fever of 100.4°F or higher with chills*