

Have you been diagnosed with scleroderma?

- » Scleroderma is a progressive autoimmune disorder that causes the hardening and thickening of the skin and internal organs.
- » Scleroderma can cause scarring in the lungs and pulmonary arteries, affecting oxygen absorption and causing high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs.
- » It is estimated that 8-12% of people with systemic scleroderma will develop a type of pulmonary hypertension (PH) called pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH).

What are PH and PAH?

- » Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a disease that can strike anyone regardless of age, sex, or background, with an estimated 10,000 Canadians currently affected. If left untreated, the average life expectancy of someone with PH is less than three years.
- » PH is defined by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs, which causes an enlargement and weakness of the right side of the heart. This can lead to heart failure or even death.
- » Pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH) is a disease in which blood is not able to circulate normally in the lungs due to narrowing of the arteries. This results in increased blood pressure in the lungs, causing the heart to work harder to pump blood into the lungs.
- » There is currently no cure for PAH but there are various treatments available that can help manage symptoms and slow down the progression of the illness.

Symptoms

- Breathlessness
- Exercise intolerance
- Swollen feet/legs
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Chest pain
- Light headedness
- Blue lips/fingers

1. **Get informed:** Recognize the symptoms of PH. If you have a history of scleroderma and are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your doctor about PH.
2. **Get screened:** The primary screening test for PH is an echocardiogram. Additional tests may be required to measure the functioning of your heart and lungs.
3. **Get referred:** There are PH clinics all across Canada. For more information visit www.SometimesItsPH.ca.

