

WHAT IS PH?

PH = PULMONARY HYPERTENSION

PULMONARY MEANS TO DO WITH THE LUNGS.
HYPERTENSION MEANS HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

**SO, PULMONARY HYPERTENSION IS
HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE IN THE LUNGS**

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

Your body has a whole network of tubes, called blood vessels, which carry blood from your heart to every other part of you, including your toes. In order for the body to function properly this blood needs to have oxygen (air) in it, that's why we breathe. When you take a breath, air fills your lungs. Your heart pumps blood to your lungs so that the blood can pick up the oxygen you just breathed. The heart then pumps the blood full of oxygen through blood vessels to every part of your body.

When a person has PH, the blood vessels in the lungs get smaller and can be closed. It's like taking a straw and biting on it: the hole through which liquid flows gets smaller so you have to suck harder to drink it. Same thing in PH: because the blood vessels in the lungs get smaller, the blood can't get through as easily and gets blocked, almost like a traffic jam. This makes the heart have to work harder to pump the blood through the blood vessels in the lungs. The heart gets tired having to do all this work, and it results in not enough oxygen getting into the blood. Because of this people who have PH have trouble breathing and get tired easily, even doing really simple things like walking.

SOME SIGNS OF PH ARE:

-  having trouble breathing,
-  having pain in the chest,
-  feeling dizzy,
-  having bluish lips, fingers and toes (because of the lack of oxygen getting to them),
-  having a hard time doing simple activities like walking, going up stairs or running,
-  fainting

CAN I CATCH PH?

No, PH is not contagious; you cannot get it from someone who has it. If you know someone with PH, you should treat him or her just like everyone else, but understand that sometimes they may not be able to do everything that you can or keep up with you because they can get tired easily.

CAN PH BE FIXED?

Right now there is no cure for PH, but doctors and researchers are working on understanding the disease better so that they can create new medicines to help people with PH, and maybe one day find a cure. Right now there are several different medicines that people with PH can take to make them feel better and to make doing everyday things easier, but they have to take these medications all the time or else they feel worse again.

WHAT CAN I DO?

PH is a rare disease, which means not a lot of people have it. So many people have never heard of it. Although it is rare, it is a very serious disease and we want people to know about it, so that if they start seeing some of the signs of the disease they can ask their doctor if they have it and get medication for it as early as possible. This means that they won't be as sick when they start getting their medicine. One of the best ways for people to learn about it is for us to tell them about it.

If someone you know has PH be understanding when they cannot do everything you'd like them to do, treat them kindly and with respect just like you would anyone else. Don't be afraid to ask questions, and offer to help if you see they are having a hard time.

