

COPD & Pulmonary Hypertension

COPD

Have you been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease?

- » **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)** is a lung condition characterized by chronic respiratory symptoms (shortness of breath, cough, sputum production and/or exacerbations) due to abnormalities of the airways (bronchitis, bronchiolitis) and or air sacs, or alveoli, (emphysema).
- » **Pulmonary hypertension** is quite common in COPD and becomes more significant as the COPD advances (low lung function and/or low oxygen levels).
- » Pulmonary hypertension related to COPD is often mild, but approximately 5% of patients with pulmonary hypertension related to COPD will develop severe pulmonary hypertension.

What is pulmonary hypertension?

- » **Pulmonary hypertension (PH)** is a disease that can strike anyone regardless of age, sex, or background.
- » Pulmonary hypertension is defined by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs, which eventually weakens and enlarges the right side of the heart. This can lead to heart failure or even death.
- » People with COPD are at risk of developing a type of pulmonary hypertension associated with lung disease (WHO Group 3 pulmonary hypertension). Doctors focus on treating the underlying lung disease to improve or resolve the elevated pressure in the pulmonary arteries.

Get informed

If you have COPD and are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your doctor about pulmonary hypertension:

- » Breathlessness
- » Exercise intolerance
- » Swollen feet/legs
- » Fainting
- » Fatigue
- » Chest pain
- » Lightheadedness
- » Blue lips/fingers

Get screened

The primary screening test for pulmonary hypertension is an echocardiogram (a painless ultrasound of the heart). Additional tests may be required to measure the functioning of your heart and lungs.

Do you need a referral?

Ask your doctor whether you should be referred to a pulmonary hypertension clinic. For more information, visit www.phacanada.ca/findaphcentre



PULMONARY HYPERTENSION
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA
L'ASSOCIATION D'HYPERTENSION
PULMONAIRE DU CANADA

www.phacanada.ca

info@phacanada.ca | 1-877-774-2226

A better life for all Canadians affected by pulmonary hypertension

Last reviewed: 2026