

Scleroderma & Pulmonary Hypertension

SCLERODERMA

Have you been diagnosed with scleroderma?

- » **Scleroderma** is a progressive autoimmune disorder that causes skin and internal organs to harden and thicken. It can cause scarring in the lungs and pulmonary arteries, affecting oxygen absorption and causing high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs.
- » Each year about 1% of people with scleroderma will develop a type of **pulmonary hypertension** called **pulmonary arterial hypertension**, with a lifetime risk of up to 25%.
- » Patients with scleroderma should get screened for pulmonary arterial hypertension every year.

What are pulmonary hypertension and pulmonary arterial hypertension?

- » **Pulmonary hypertension (PH)** is a disease that can strike anyone regardless of age, sex, or background. PH 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.
- » **Pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH, WHO Group I pulmonary hypertension)** is a disease in which the arteries in the lungs are narrowed. This results in higher blood pressure in the lungs and causes the heart to work harder to pump blood through them.
- » There is currently no cure for pulmonary arterial hypertension, but there are treatments available that can help improve symptoms, reduce the likelihood of heart failure, and slow down the progression of the illness.

Get informed

If you have scleroderma 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



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A better life for all Canadians affected by pulmonary hypertension

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