

Questions to Ask Your Pulmonary Care Team

Original Source: <http://www.pulmonologychannel.com/patient-information-pulmonology/index.shtml>

Acute and chronic lung diseases, such as asthma, cystic fibrosis, lung cancer, COPD, and pneumonia, and other breathing problems are serious medical conditions that affect the respiratory tract (e.g., lungs, bronchial tubes, throat, nose). According to the American Lung Association, more than 35 million people in the United States have chronic lung disease.

Lung disease often is managed by a pulmonary care team that includes physicians (e.g., pulmonologist, pediatric pulmonologist, internist), respiratory therapists, nurse practitioners, respiratory care nurses, and pulmonary function technicians. Good communication between the patient and his or her pulmonary care team plays an important role in managing conditions that affect the respiratory tract. Members of the pulmonary care team work together to develop a treatment plan and to explain respiratory diagnostic tests and treatment options carefully to the patient and the patient's family.

Here are some questions to ask your pulmonologist, respiratory therapist, or other member of your pulmonary care team about your lung condition. **Print this page**, check off the questions you would like answered, and take it with you to your appointment.

- Do you suspect my symptoms are related to an obstructive lung disease, such as asthma or COPD, or to a restrictive lung disease, such as pulmonary fibrosis or lung cancer?

- What is the name of the lung disease you suspect is responsible for causing my respiratory symptoms? Is this condition known by any other names?

- What types of diagnostic tests will be performed to confirm or rule out this diagnosis (e.g., pulmonary function tests, chest x-ray, CT scan)?

- How should I prepare for these diagnostic tests? How long will the tests take?

- Will the results of these tests be available immediately? If not, how long will it take to get the results? Should I call, or will someone contact me?

Telephone # to call:

When to call: Date:

Time:

- Is my condition acute or chronic? Is it congenital (hereditary) or related to smoking or my environment? Is there a cure for this lung disease?

- What complications may develop as a result of my condition?

- What will be the course of treatment? Can my condition be controlled with medication, such as inhalers, cough medicines (e.g., expectorants), or antibiotics?

- What are the common side effects of these medications and what should I do if I experience severe side effects?

Telephone # to call:

- If medication is ineffective, what other treatment options are available?

- May I require oxygen therapy or surgery, such as lung reduction or lung transplant?

- Are there any complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies that may be used to treat my condition?

- How often should I be seen for follow-up appointments and pulmonary function testing?

Next appointment: Date: _____ Time: _____

- Where can I find more information about my lung disease?

- Can you recommend a local or online support group for patients with lung disease?

Notes: