



## Heart Health Fact Sheet

# Let's Chat Pulmonary Hypertension



Pulmonary hypertension is a condition where your lungs have a blood pressure which is too high. The effect of this on your heart is that the right side (which pumps blood into the lungs) has to work much harder than usual.

When your heart has to work much harder, it becomes abnormal in shape and thickness, resulting in conditions such as heart failure.

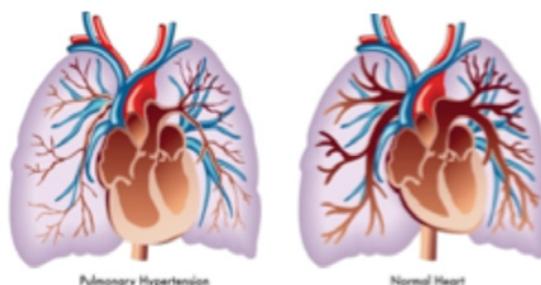
### What happens to your heart and body during pregnancy?

The signs and symptoms for pulmonary hypertension can be similar to many of the symptoms for heart disease, therefore it is essential that you visit your GP if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Coughing
- Dizziness
- Chest pain
- Palpitations
- Tiredness
- Weakness
- Blue lips and skin
- Rapid weight gain
- Swollen lower legs
- Abdominal bloating

### What are the causes?

Pulmonary hypertension occurs when the arteries that supply blood to the lungs become smaller and more narrow, increasing their overall pressure. The increase in pressure then results in the right side of the heart working harder, eventually it will be unable to cope with the demand in pressure.



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## Pulmonary Hypertension



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### What are the statistics?

- Pulmonary hypertension is considered a rare condition, however it may result in other serious conditions (such as heart failure) without timely diagnosis and management.
- Statistics for Australia are difficult to obtain, however world-wide studies have suggested that the condition is increasing over time.
- A recent Canadian study suggest that most cohorts of pulmonary hypertension sufferers were mostly females who were older in age and had comorbidities such as heart disease.

### What are the treatments?

There are a number of different treatment options available for you if you have pulmonary hypertension:

**Lifestyle changes:** This includes eating a heart-friendly diet, exercising with an approved plan from your doctor as well as attending a rehabilitation program to help you learn how to manage your condition.

**Oxygen therapy treatment:** If your oxygen levels are too low your doctor may recommend a period of oxygen therapy to help you with your breathing.

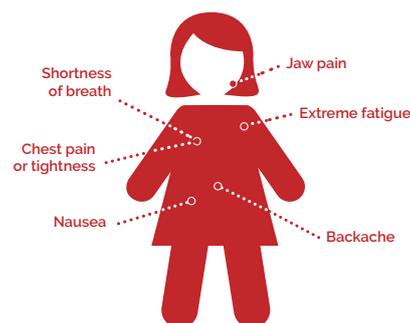
**Medications:** Your doctor may suggest you go on some medications for your condition such as vasodilators (to reduce the pressure in your lungs), digoxin/ similar drugs (to increase the effectiveness of your heart's pumping ability) as well as blood thinning medications (such as aspirin) to reduce your risk of blood clots in the lungs.

**Surgery:** There are some surgery options available for people to reduce pressure in the lungs or remove blood clots if they are the cause of the pulmonary hypertension.

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### Heart Attack Signs in Women

Warning signs differ between men and women. Women's symptoms include chest discomfort which radiates up to the throat, jaw and through to the back and shoulder blades, extreme fatigue, shortness of breath, heart fluttering, light-headedness and nausea.



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### Resources

**Pulmonary Hypertension Association of America** <https://phassociation.org/>

**Pulmonary Hypertension Association of Australia** <http://www.phaaustralia.com/>

**Pulmonary Hypertension society of Australia and New Zealand** <https://www.phsanz.org/>

**CTEPH International** <https://www.cteph-association.org/>