



## Pulmonary Hypertension

Pulmonary hypertension, is increased pressure in the pulmonary arteries. These arteries carry blood from your heart to your lungs to pick up oxygen.

PH causes symptoms such as shortness of breath during routine activity (for example, climbing two flights of stairs), tiredness, chest pain, and a racing heartbeat. As the disease worsens, its symptoms may limit all physical activity.

### **Overview**

The lower right chamber of your heart, the right ventricle (VEN-trih-kul), pumps blood to your pulmonary arteries. The blood then travels to your lungs, where it picks up oxygen. This oxygen-rich blood is pumped to the rest of your body. (For more information, see the Diseases and Conditions Index article on [How the Heart Works](#).)

Three types of changes can affect the pulmonary arteries and cause PH:

- The walls of the arteries tighten.
- The walls of the arteries are stiff at birth or become stiff from an overgrowth of cells.
- Blood clots form in the arteries.

These changes make it hard for the heart to push blood through the arteries and into the lungs. Thus, the pressure in the arteries rises. Also, as a result of the heart working harder, the right ventricle becomes strained and weak.

## **What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Pulmonary Hypertension?**

Signs and symptoms of pulmonary hypertension (PH) may include:

- Shortness of breath during routine activity, such as climbing two flights of stairs
- Tiredness
- Chest pain
- A racing heartbeat

As PH worsens, you may find it hard to do any physical activities. At this point, other signs and symptoms may include:

- Feeling lightheaded, especially during physical activity
- Fainting at times
- Swelling in your legs and ankles
- A bluish color on your lips and skin