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Collapsed Lung

A collapsed lung happens when air enters the pleural space, the area between the lung and the chest wall. If it is a total collapse, it is called pneumothorax. If only part of the lung is affected, it is called atelectasis.

Causes of a collapsed lung include:

- Lung diseases such as pneumonia or lung cancer
- Being on a breathing machine
- Surgery on the chest or abdomen
- A blocked airway

If only a small area of the lung is affected, you may not have symptoms. If a large area is affected, you may feel short of breath and have a rapid heart rate.



A chest x-ray can tell if you have it. Treatment depends on the underlying cause.

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- **Atelectasis** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/atelectasis/symptoms-causes/syc-20369684?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
- **Pneumothorax** [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/pneumothorax/symptoms-causes/syc-20350367?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/diseases-conditions/pneumothorax/symptoms-causes/syc-20350367?p=1>]

Diagnosis and Tests


- **Bronchoscopy and Bronchoalveolar Lavage (BAL)** [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/bronchoscopy-and-bronchoalveolar-lavage-bal/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/broncoscopia-con-lavado-broncoalveolar/>]
- **Shortness of Breath** [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/shortness-of-breath/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/falta-de-aire-es/?adfree=true>]
- **Tests for Lung Disease** [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/lung-tests>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/pruebas-pulmonares>]

Treatments and Therapies


- **Chest tube insertion - series** [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100008_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100008_1.htm]
- **Chest Tube Thoracostomy** [<https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/chest-tube-thoracostomy.pdf>] (American Thoracic Society) - **PDF**

Pneumothorax - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100150_1.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100150_1.htm]

Living With

- Pulmonary Rehabilitation: MedlinePlus Health Topic [https://medlineplus.gov/pulmonaryrehabilitation.html]
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pulmonaryrehabilitation.html]



Related Issues

- What Is LAM (Lymphangioleiomyomatosis)? [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/lam]
 (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/lam]

Specifics

- What is a Spontaneous Pneumothorax? [https://www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/spontaneous-pneumothorax.pdf] (American Thoracic Society) - **PDF**

Clinical Trials



- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pneumothorax [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pneumothorax%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pulmonary Atelectasis [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pulmonary+Atelectasis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles


References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Thoracic CT findings and patient demographics associated with traumatic pneumothorax: recommendations... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40745562]
- Article: Pneumothorax and Pneumomediastinum in SARS-CoV-2 Infection. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40731812]
- Article: Nodular Histiocytic/Mesothelial Hyperplasia - not such a rare phenomenon in children... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40679022]
- Collapsed Lung -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pulmonary+Atelectasis%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+OR+%22Pneumothorax%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Reference Desk

- How the Lungs Work [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/lungs]   (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/es/salud/pulmones]

Find an Expert

- American Lung Association [https://www.lung.org/]
- Lung HelpLine [https://www.lung.org/help-support/lung-helpline] (American Lung Association)
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/] 

Patient Handouts

- Atelectasis [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000065.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000065.htm]

Chest tube insertion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002947.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002947.htm>]

- Collapsed lung (pneumothorax) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000087.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000087.htm>]

- Hemothorax [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000126.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000126.htm>]

- Lung surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002956.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/002956.htm>]

- Pneumothorax - infants [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007312.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)

Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007312.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Atelectasis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000065.htm>]

Chest tube insertion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002947.htm>]

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Related Health Topics

Chest Injuries and Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/chestinjuriesanddisorders.html>]

Lung Diseases [<https://medlineplus.gov/lungdiseases.html>]

Pleural Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/pleuraldisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Collapsed Lung* is the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>]

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