



Home → Health Topics → Pleural Disorders

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/pleuraldisorders.html>

Pleural Disorders

Your pleura is a large, thin sheet of tissue that wraps around the outside of your lungs and lines the inside of your chest cavity. Between the layers of the pleura is a very thin space. Normally it's filled with a small amount of fluid. The fluid helps the two layers of the pleura glide smoothly past each other as your lungs breathe air in and out.

Disorders of the pleura include:

- Pleurisy - inflammation of the pleura that causes sharp pain with breathing
- Pleural effusion - excess fluid in the pleural space
- Pneumothorax - buildup of air or gas in the pleural space
- Hemothorax - buildup of blood in the pleural space

Many different conditions can cause pleural problems. Viral infection is the most common cause of pleurisy. The most common cause of pleural effusion is congestive heart failure [<https://medlineplus.gov/heartfailure.html>] . Lung diseases, like COPD [<https://medlineplus.gov/copd.html>] , tuberculosis, and acute lung injury, cause pneumothorax. Injury to the chest is the most common cause of hemothorax. Treatment focuses on removing fluid, air, or blood from the pleural space, relieving symptoms, and treating the underlying condition.

NIH: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Start Here

- What Are Pleural Disorders? [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/pleural-disorders>]  (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

Diagnosis and Tests

- Pleural Fluid Analysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/pleural-fluid-analysis/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/analisis-del-liquido-pleural/>]
- 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]

Specifics

- Cardiopulmonary Syndrome Overview [https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects/cardio-pulmonary-pdq#_1]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/tratamiento/efectos-secundarios/cardio-pulmonares-pdq>]
- Collapsed Lung: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/collapsedlung.html>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/collapsedlung.html>]

- Malignant Pleural Effusion [https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects cardiopulmonary-pdq#_210]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/tratamiento/efectos-secundarios/cardiopulmonares-pdq#_210]
- Pleurisy (Pleuritis) [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/pleurisy-pleuritis/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/pleuresia-pleuritis-es/?adfree=true>]
- 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>]

Genetics

- Primary spontaneous pneumothorax: MedlinePlus Genetics [<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/primary-spontaneous-pneumothorax>]  (National Library of Medicine)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pleural Diseases [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pleural+Diseases%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pleural Effusion [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pleural+Effusion%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pleurisy [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pleurisy%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Pneumothorax [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Pneumothorax%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Thoracentesis [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Thoracentesis%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

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

- Article: Previous Suture Type and Diameter of Fistula Predict Overall Repair Success... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40634067>]
- Article: Efficacy evaluation of autologous muscle flap transposition or myocutaneous flap transplantation... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40304685>]
- Article: Advanced imaging techniques and artificial intelligence in pleural diseases: a narrative... [<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40174960>]
- Pleural Disorders -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Pleural+Diseases%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%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/>]
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute [<https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/>] 

Children

- Chylothorax [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/chylothorax.html>] (Nemours Foundation)

Patient Handouts

- 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>]
- Empyema [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000123.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000123.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>]
- Metastatic pleural tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000117.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000117.htm>]
- Pleural effusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000086.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000086.htm>]
- Pleurisy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001371.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/001371.htm>]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

- Chest CT [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003788.htm>]
- Chest MRI [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003794.htm>]
- Chest tube insertion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002947.htm>]
- Chest tube insertion - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100008_1.htm]
- Chest x-ray [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003804.htm>]
- Collapsed lung (pneumothorax) [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000087.htm>]
- Cytology exam of pleural fluid [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003866.htm>]
- Empyema [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000123.htm>]
- Hemothorax [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000126.htm>]
- Lung surgery [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002956.htm>]
- Lung surgery - discharge [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000242.htm>]
- Metastatic pleural tumor [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000117.htm>]
- Open pleural biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003863.htm>]

Pleural effusion [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000086.htm>]

Pleural fluid analysis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003624.htm>]

Pleural fluid culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003725.htm>]

Pleural fluid Gram stain [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003722.htm>]

Pleural fluid smear [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003721.htm>]

Pleural needle biopsy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003862.htm>]

Pleurisy [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001371.htm>]

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

Pneumothorax - series [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100150_1.htm]

Thoracentesis [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003420.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Breathing Problems [<https://medlineplus.gov/breathingproblems.html>]

Collapsed Lung [<https://medlineplus.gov/collapsedlung.html>]

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

National Institutes of Health

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

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