



Glossary

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About the Glossary

This document defines common terms and acronyms used in the pulmonary fibrosis community. Items are in alphabetical order.

A – B

Acute exacerbation (AE)

A sudden worsening of the disease that leads to a significant decline in lung function. The causes may be known or unknown.

Arterial blood gases

A medical test that shows the amount of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your bloodstream.

Biopsy, lung biopsy

A medical test that is performed by a surgeon. The test requires a small cut in the side of the chest so that small pieces of lung tissue can be removed and examined under a microscope to help make the diagnosis.

Bronchoscopy

A medical test in which the practitioner inserts a small flexible tube, called a bronchoscope, through your mouth or nose and into your lungs. The test can help find any infection that may be causing symptoms or other types of interstitial lung disease

C

Center of excellence

A place where the highest standards are met. One listing of centers of excellence is the PFF Care Center Network, a group of medical centers that have expertise in treating adult patients with fibrotic lung diseases and use a multidisciplinary approach to patient care.



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Comorbidity

A disease or medical condition that is simultaneously present with another or others in a person.

Connective tissue disease

A group of diseases characterized by inflammation or changes in connective tissue

CT scan, computed tomography scan

A special type of x-ray that can show scarring in your lungs. The type of scarring can help identify the type of interstitial lung disease.

CPAP

A medical device that treats sleep apnea. A CPAP uses mild air pressure to keep the airways open, and is typically used by patients who have breathing problems during sleep.

D – E

DLCO

DLCO is a measure of the efficiency of lung gas transfer. Also known as diffusing capacity or transfer factor of the lung for carbon monoxide (CO), it measures the extent to which oxygen passes from the air sacs of the lungs into the blood.

Durable medical equipment, DME

Medical items that are designed for repeated use, such as oxygen equipment and accessories, nebulizers, and nebulizer medications

Dyspnea

A medical term that describes shortness of breath

Exacerbation

A medical term that describes an increase in the severity of symptoms. The onset may be rapid, called an acute exacerbation. The causes may be known or unknown.

F – L

Forced expiratory volume (FEV)



Glossary

A measure of how much air a person can exhale during a forced breath. The amount of air exhaled can be measured during the first, second, or third seconds of a breath during a medical FEV test; respectively called FEV1, FEV2, and FEV3. Decreases in the FEV1 value may mean lung disease is getting worse.

FEV, Forced expiratory volume

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Forced vital capacity (FVC)

A measure of the total amount of air exhaled during the FEV test

Fibrosis

A medical term for thickening or scarring of tissue.

FVC, Forced Vital Capacity

A measure of the total amount of air exhaled during the FEV test. Forced expiratory volume is an important measurement of lung function

GERD, gastroesophageal reflux disease

A condition in which a person's stomach contents flow backward into the esophagus causing heartburn and other potential issues, sometimes shortened to reflux.

HFO, HFOV, high-frequency oscillatory ventilation

A type of mechanical ventilation that uses fluctuating variations of pressure at very high rates

Hospice care

A healthcare option for patients with a terminal illness that provides physical, social, emotional, and spiritual needs outside of a hospital setting, often at home. Hospice is often used at the late stages of a terminal illness.

HRCT scan, High-resolution tomography scan,

A special kind of CT scan that is higher resolution, showing a more detailed image of the type of lung scarring that is present in pulmonary fibrosis and interstitial lung disease.

Hypoxemia

A condition where the oxygen level in a person's blood is low. Normal oxygen levels for a healthy person are 95% or above.



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Hypoxia

A condition where the oxygen level in a person's tissues is low that is caused when the blood does not carry adequate amounts of oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body.

Idiopathic

A description of a disease or condition whose cause is unknown.

Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF)

A specific interstitial lung disease where the cause of pulmonary fibrosis is unknown.

Interstitial Lung Disease

A large group of diseases, most of which cause progressive scarring of lung tissue.

LPM

Liters per minute is the measurement of how much oxygen flows from an oxygen delivery device, such as an oxygen concentrator. *Note:* the numerical setting on a medical device is not liters per minute; the number indicates only a low, medium, or high setting of the device.

M – R

Palliative care

A healthcare option that provides management and relief from pain and other distressing symptoms of an illness. People often confuse palliative care with hospice care, but they are different, though both can be delivered near the end-stage of a disease.

Oxygen concentrator

A medical device that draws in the surrounding air and filters out nitrogen. This process increases the concentration of oxygen in the air it delivers through a tube.

Portable oxygen concentrator, POC

A small, light-weight oxygen concentrator that is intended to be carried or pulled. It can be operated by a battery or plugged in.

Pulmonary

A medical term that means relating to or occurring in the lungs.

Pulmonary arterial hypertension (PAH)

A type of high blood pressure that is located in the pulmonary arteries.



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Pulmonary fibrosis (PF)

A condition that occurs when the lung tissue becomes damaged and scarred, which makes it difficult for the lungs to work properly to supply the body with oxygen. Pulmonary fibrosis may occur as a result of many different diseases or the cause may be unknown.

Pulmonary function test (PFTs)

A test that measures how well a person's lungs are working. Pulmonary function tests are non-invasive and can be completed in a doctor's office with simple equipment. A PFT measures how much air you can blow in and out of your lungs and how well your lungs can absorb oxygen.

Pulmonary hypertension

A type of high blood pressure that affects the arteries in the lungs and the right side of the heart, sometimes occurs along with pulmonary fibrosis.

Rheumatologist

A physician whose specialty is the diagnosis and treatment of diseases such as autoimmune disease.

S

Six-minute walk test (SMWT)

This simple walking test measures the amount of oxygen in your blood at rest and during the walk.

Sleep Apnea

A disorder in which breathing repeatedly stops and starts while a person is sleeping. Sleep apnea sometimes occurs along with pulmonary fibrosis.

Spirometry

A lung test that measures how much and how quickly you can move air out of your lungs.

Stage, staging

A medical term that describes the phases in progressive disease. There is no universally accepted agreement on the stages of pulmonary fibrosis. Some doctors describe the progression as mild, moderate, severe, or very severe.

T - Z

Total lung capacity (TLC)

A measure of the total amount of air your lungs can hold during a medical test.



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x-ray, chest x-ray

An image of your lungs that can show interstitial lung disease and, when compared to earlier images, can help monitor progressions.