ILD can be compared to the embers of a campfire. During exacerbation, these embers ignite violently, causing a sudden, raging fire.

If that occurs, it is important to contact your health care team immediately so that they can take charge of your care.

DIAGNOSIS

Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, people with ILD are diagnosed late, i.e. after several visits to the doctor and several misdiagnoses.

High-resolution computed tomography (HR-CT) is frequently used to diagnose and monitor ILD. It takes a scan of the chest and produces a 3D image. The term “honeycomb” is used to describe the characteristic appearance of alveoli (air sacs) damaged by ILD.

Lung function tests are frequently used to measure the progression of lung injury.

Although not performed as a routine procedure, a lung biopsy (taking a small sample of lung tissue) may be necessary if a diagnosis cannot be confirmed following an HR-MRT.

In addition, you may be asked to take a 6-minute walk test (6MWT). This test aims to measure your tolerance to exercise, but also to highlight and quantify the decrease in oxygen levels during exertion.

TREATMENTS

After several years of research, drugs such as pirfenidone and nintedanib have been shown to slow the progression of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF). However, only nintedanib is indicated for progressive fibrosing interstitial lung disease (ILD.) It helps to slow the progression of the disease while also reducing the risk of acute exacerbation.

Your medical management may also include:

- Anti-inflammatory drugs;
- Opioids;
- Oxygen;
- Pulmonary rehabilitation;
- Palliative symptom management;
- A lung transplant.

ADVICE & PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Making changes to your lifestyle, whether big or small, can help you better control the disease and improve your quality of life:

- Quit smoking;
- Limit your exposure to irritating products;
- If you have gastroesophageal reflux disease, talk to your practitioner;
- Follow a healthy diet;
- Stay active;
- Get an annual flu shot and, if possible, a pneumococcal vaccine;
- Wash your hands regularly;
- Avoid contact with people with cold, flu or pneumonia-like symptoms.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

The Quebec Lung Association (QLA) organizes support groups for people diagnosed with lung diseases? One of these groups is for people living with IPF. If you need information, the QLA also has a toll-free number you can call from Monday to Friday.

Furthermore, in June 2021, the association set up a platform that matches two people with similar realities so they can have someone to share their experience with.

Unaun.ca

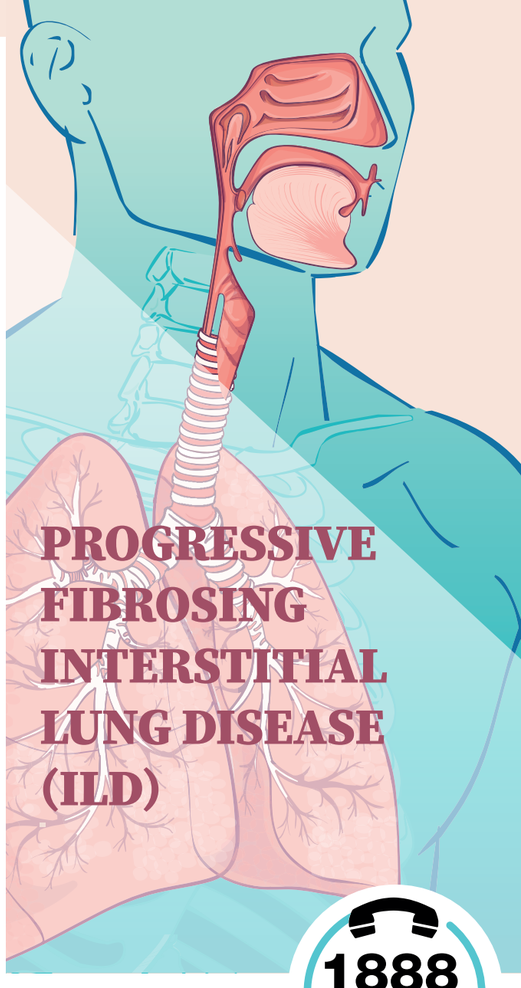
The QLA has developed a tool to encourage people suffering from respiratory diseases to be physically active.

Download the **Guide d’enseignement et de réadaptation pulmonaire** (pulmonary education and rehabilitation guide) (in French only).*

Would you like to learn more about IPF?

Download the **Guide to Living with Progressive Fibrosing Interstitial Lung Disease.***

*You can also order our guides by phone.



PROGRESSIVE FIBROSING INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASE (ILD)

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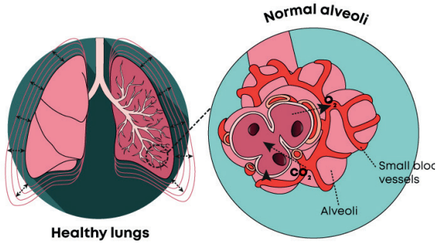
Association pulmonaire du Québec

WHAT IS PROGRESSIVE FIBROSING INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASE (ILD)?

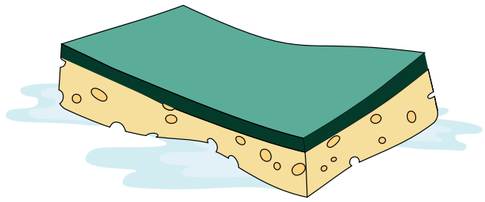
Interstitial lung disease, or ILD, refers to a broad group of lung diseases that cause abnormal scarring of lung tissue.

The accumulation of scar tissue makes the lungs tissue stiff and causes irreversible damage to the bronchioles and alveoli. For many people with ILD, the scarring or fibrosis may continue to worsen (i.e. the disease progresses).

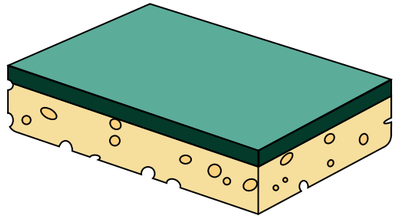
ILD is an umbrella term that includes more than 200 diseases. It is estimated that just under 50% of people with ILD have a progressive fibrosing form of the disease. This represents around 25,000 Canadians.



Lungs essentially work like a sponge.



A lung with healthy tissue is like a wet sponge: it can be easily compressed and quickly returns to its original shape. A wet sponge contracts and expands smoothly, like healthy lungs, i.e. breathing is not limited.



The scarred and rigid tissue typical of ILD-damaged lungs is more like a dry sponge: very difficult to compress and very inflexible. Due to the scar tissue, the lungs have trouble expanding, making breathing more difficult.

TYPES OF PROGRESSIVE FIBROSING INTERSTITIAL LUNG DISEASE

> **Idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF)**

> **Idiopathic interstitial lung disease other than IPF:**
- Non-specific interstitial lung disease;
- Idiopathic pleuroparenchymal fibroelastosis.

> **ILD of autoimmune origin:**
- ILD associated with systemic scleroderma, rheumatoid arthritis or systemic lupus erythematosus.

> **Exposure-related ILD:**
- Asbestosis;
- Silicosis;
- Berylliosis;
- Environmental irritants (Gas, vapours, pollutants, mould);
- Occupational hazards (Metal dust, Wood dust, Agricultural chemicals, Hair products).

> **Sarcoidosis**

> **Hypersensitivity pneumonitis (HP):**
- ILD related to exposure to animal or plant;
- Dust.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Progressive fibrosing ILD is a chronic, progressive disease, which means it can get worse over time. Progressive fibrosing ILD can differ from person to person and may vary depending on the initial diagnosis. It is impossible to predict how quickly the disease will progress. Some people will remain stable or deteriorate slowly over the years, while others will progress rapidly following diagnosis.

Symptoms associated with ILD can vary from one person to another and can appear over several months or even years:

- Trouble breathing (shortness of breath);
- Dry cough;
- Fatigue;
- Loss of appetite;
- Weight loss.

Be attentive to sudden changes to your symptoms. You may experience acute exacerbation, which is a sudden worsening of the disease.

THE QUEBEC LUNG ASSOCIATION

Incorporated in 1938, the Quebec Lung Association is the only non-profit organization that promotes respiratory health. Its mission is to fight lung disease through education, prevention, rehabilitation and research on respiratory diseases. It also offers support to people affected by these diseases, and their loved ones. The QLA also addresses environmental factors that can harm respiratory health.

By working to improve the respiratory health of Quebecers, the living conditions of people suffering from a respiratory disease and encouraging them to take charge of their health, the QLA has a direct impact on the quality of life of people of all ages. The QLA's actions also have direct impacts on public health.

Contact us by calling
1-888-POUMON9 (1-888-768-6669)
or by emailing us
info@poumonquebec.ca
Visit our website
poumonquebec.ca/en

Association pulmonaire du Québec