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Update on COVID-19 and Lung Fibrosis

Individuals who have been newly diagnosed with pulmonary fibrosis (PF) following SARS-CoV-2 infection should be informed on how a PF diagnosis is made and what is still unknown about the risk of developing PF after COVID-19 illness.

The impact of SARS-CoV-2 infection on the development of chronic and progressive lung disease is under study, and much remains unknown.

- The rates of development of pulmonary fibrosis (PF) or interstitial lung disease (ILD) after severe, moderate, mild, or asymptomatic COVID-19 infection are undefined. Severe COVID-19 pneumonia with Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS) appears to confer the highest risk for subsequent PF.
- While patients are being followed after infection, data does not yet exist to understand whether post-COVID-19 abnormalities in lung function or chest imaging will improve, stay stable, or progress over time. Optimal management of these findings is also being investigated.

Post-acute sequelae of SARS-CoV-2 (PASC) is a term to describe a prolonged constellation of symptoms, including breathlessness and cough, that some individuals experience after COVID-19 illness. Treatment of PASC is being studied, and currently involves supportive care, symptom management, and treatment of serious complications, such as blood clots or heart damage.

Persistent respiratory symptoms after COVID-19 should be evaluated by a healthcare professional, ideally a pulmonologist, who can assess symptoms and perform appropriate testing, such as pulmonary function tests and x-rays. While respiratory symptoms are very common in PASC, findings consistent with PF are not seen in most patients. In patients with a history of COVID-19, the diagnosis of PF is made in the same way as in other forms of PF: by evaluation of a patient's medical, environmental and occupational history; a physical examination; pulmonary function tests; a high-resolution CT scan; and sometimes, a lung biopsy.

For patients who are newly diagnosed with PF following COVID-19, the [Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation](https://www.pulmonaryfibrosis.org) provides educational resources on supportive care including supplemental oxygen, pulmonary rehabilitation, pulmonary function tests and the PFF Care Center Network.

To learn more, visit pulmonaryfibrosis.org.

About the Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation

The Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation (PFF) mobilizes people and resources to provide access to high quality care and leads research for a cure so people with pulmonary fibrosis will live longer, healthier lives. The PFF collaborates with physicians, organizations, patients, and caregivers worldwide. The PFF has a four-star rating from Charity Navigator and is an accredited charity by the Better Business Wise Giving Alliance. The Foundation has met all of the requirements of the National Health Council Standards of Excellence Certification Program®, and has earned the Guidestar Gold Seal of Transparency. For more information, visit pulmonaryfibrosis.org or call 844.TalkPFF (844.825.5733).

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