

Describes the inflammation of the pleura (the membrane of the lungs).

What to look for

Pleurisy:

- *pain in the chest*

Pleural Effusion:

- *shortness of breath.*
- *a dry cough.*

You will find it very difficult and painful to breathe if you have this condition and if you do not have it treated immediately, could turn into pleural effusion. These two conditions are not diseases and only happen as a result of an underlying disease.

A number of conditions (most commonly congestive heart failure but including chest injuries, viral infections, rheumatoid arthritis, pneumonia, tuberculosis and cancer) can irritate the pleura.

Pleurisy and pleural effusion are generally only as serious as the underlying disease. **Seek medical attention immediately if you haven't already.**

Causes

Each lung is surrounded by the double-layered pleura. Normally these membranes are in constant contact with each other as the lung moves in and out in the act of breathing. There is a small space between these two layers that allows this movement. But when the layers become inflamed their surfaces rub together disturbingly with every breath, sneeze, and cough. This condition is known as pleurisy.

Pleural effusion occurs when excess fluid seeps into the pleural space. The added fluid puts tremendous pressure on the lungs, reducing their mobility and causing shortness of breath. This excess fluid can, in some cases of pleural effusion, become infected, causing a condition known as empyema.

Your doctor will be able to diagnose pleurisy with a physical examination which may have to be confirmed by an X-Ray.

Traditional Treatment

It is usual for your doctor to treat the disease which has caused pleurisy or pleural effusion first. In some cases of pleural effusion, however, excess fluid must be drained.

Your doctor may prescribe antibiotics and/or anti-inflammatory drugs as well as a diuretic to help drain the fluid in the case of effusion.

Dietary Considerations

Large doses of vitamin C and vitamin A may be recommended by your naturopath. But always consult your conventional doctor first for a proper diagnosis of the ailment.

When to seek further professional advice

- you are experiencing any of the symptoms listed in the description section