

Treatments: Lungs



Pneumothorax

If you feel well enough to travel and are not undergoing intensive treatment e.g. for kidney cancer or pneumothorax (known as a BHD patients are at an increased risk of experiencing a spontaneous pneumothorax, or collapsed lung. This can be partial, or complete.

The risk of a pneumothorax may be further increased by smoking, flying in unpressurised aeroplanes, scuba diving and strenuous activity at high altitude however the increase in risk will differ between individuals.

Symptoms of a pneumothorax include a sharp stabbing pain on one side of the chest, the pain is made worse by breathing in, and difficulty breathing or breathlessness.

If you think you are experiencing a pneumothorax you should seek immediate medical attention, preferably from an emergency department at a hospital so you can seek treatment quickly. They will confirm you have a pneumothorax with a chest x-ray.

Pneumothoraces are not normally life threatening if they are small or if you receive treatment.

Treatments

The treatment you receive for a pneumothorax will depend on a number of factors and you should always discuss available options and their side effects with your doctor.

You should always inform your doctor you have BHD and whether you have had any previous surgery on your lungs as this may affect which treatment you receive.

Available treatments for pneumothorax include:

- **Chest Thoracostomy:** a plastic tube is inserted into the chest to allow the air to drain and the lung to reinflate naturally
- **Pleurodesis:** a procedure that sticks the outside surface of the lung to the chest wall preventing further collapse. Pleurectomy (removal of the lining between the chest wall and the lung) can also be performed making it easier for the the lung to stick to the chest wall.

Surgery to remove a part of the lung (resection) or the cysts (blebectomy or bullectomy) can also be performed but it is important to discuss this fully with your surgeon as you may experience decreased lung function following the surgery.

If you would like to get in touch with the BHD Foundation, please email our team: contact@bhdsyndrome.org

For more information about our work and BHD, you can visit our website: www.thebhdfoundation.org