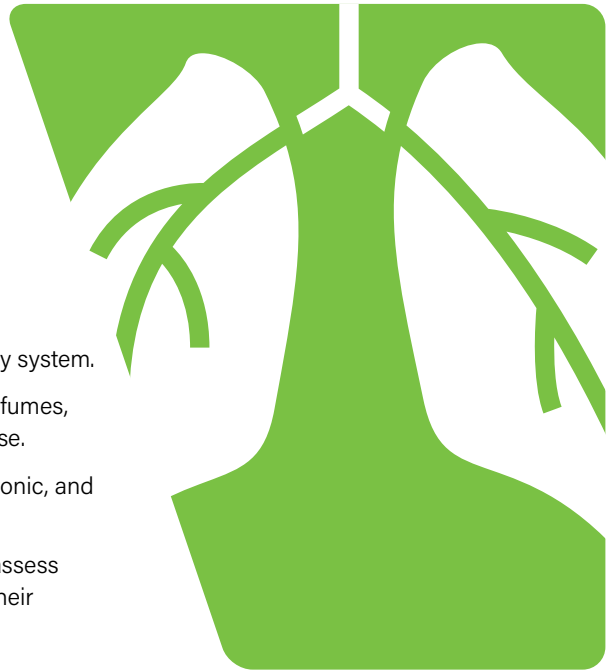


WHAT ARE OCCUPATIONAL LUNG DISEASES?



Occupational lung diseases are work-related lung conditions of the respiratory system.

If a person is exposed hazardous air in their workplace, such as dusts, gases, fumes, mists, microorganisms or vapours they are at risk of developing serious disease.

There are a broad range of lung diseases that may be acute, sub-acute or chronic, and either malignant, non-malignant, or infectious in nature.

Read Safe Work Australia's [resources](#) for information on how to identify and assess hazards, manage and control risks and monitor control measures to protect their workers from developing occupational lung diseases.

Disease	Definition from the Lung Foundation Australia
Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease	COPD is an umbrella term for a group of lung diseases including emphysema and chronic bronchitis. It is a progressive disease that causes narrowing of the airways in the lungs, making it difficult to breathe.
Hypersensitivity pneumonitis	Hypersensitivity pneumonitis occurs when the tissue in your lungs has an allergic reaction to an inhaled substance and becomes inflamed (swollen and irritable).
Mesothelioma	Like asbestosis, mesothelioma develops as a result of inhaling asbestos fibres. Mesothelioma is a type of cancer that affects the mesothelium, a thin tissue membrane covering internal organs of the body.
Work-related asthma	Work-related asthma is caused by inhaling dust, fumes, gases or other potentially hazardous agents while at work, making the airways inflamed and irritable. Work-related asthma describes the development (occupational asthma) or worsening of asthma (work-exacerbated asthma) due to occupational factors.
Pneumoconiosis	<p>Pneumoconiosis is the general term for lung fibrosis (or lung scarring) that is caused by inhalation of dust. Inhaling this dust causes a reaction in the lungs, including inflammation, which can lead to scar tissue (fibrosis) or small masses of tissue (nodules) forming. Fibrosis and nodules initially do not cause any symptoms.</p> <p>Common types of pneumoconiosis:</p> <p>Asbestosis: Asbestosis is caused by breathing in high levels of asbestos fibres, generally over long periods of time. The fibres lodge in the lung tissue, causing inflammation and scarring in the lungs.</p> <p>Coal worker's pneumoconiosis: Coal worker's pneumoconiosis (CWP) is a type of pneumoconiosis caused by inhalation of coal dust, generally over long periods of time. Inhaling this dust causes a reaction in the lungs, including inflammation, which can lead to scar tissue (fibrosis) or small masses of tissue (nodules) forming. Fibrosis and nodules initially do not cause any symptoms.</p> <p>Silicosis: Silicosis is mainly caused by inhaling respirable crystalline silica dust, which is created when cutting, drilling, grinding and polishing certain types of stone, rock, sand and clay. Over time, inhaling this dust causes inflammation which leads to scarring of the lung tissue. This can cause stiffening of the lungs, making it difficult to breathe.</p> <p>Other types of pneumoconiosis:</p> <p>Aluminosis: caused by aluminium-bearing dust</p> <p>Berylliosis: caused by dusts or vapours containing beryllium</p> <p>Byssinosis: caused by dust from vegetable fibres, such as flax, hemp or cotton</p> <p>Hard metal pneumoconiosis: caused by dusts from hard metals such as tungsten, tungsten carbide and cobalt</p> <p>Talcosis: caused by talc dust</p>

Lung Foundation Australia offers a range of [programs and educational resources](#) to support people with lung disease.