

## Pleurisy

Pleurisy, also known as pleuritis, is a condition characterised by inflammation of the pleura, which is the double-layered membrane that surrounds the lungs and lines the chest cavity. The pleura helps protect and lubricate the lungs, allowing them to expand and contract smoothly during breathing.

When the pleura becomes inflamed, the layers rub against each other, resulting in sharp chest pain that worsens with breathing, coughing, or sneezing. Pleurisy can occur as a primary condition or as a symptom of an underlying medical condition, such as infections, autoimmune disorders, pulmonary embolism, or lung diseases like pneumonia or tuberculosis.

The most common symptom of pleurisy is chest pain, which may range from a mild ache to a sharp, stabbing sensation. Other symptoms can include:

1. Dry cough
2. Shortness of breath
3. Fever (if an infection is present)
4. Rapid, shallow breathing
5. Rapid heartbeat
6. Fatigue
7. Muscle aches and joint pain (associated with some causes of pleurisy)

To diagnose pleurisy, a doctor will typically perform a physical examination, listen to the patient's breathing with a stethoscope, and may order additional tests such as a chest X-ray, CT scan, or ultrasound. Blood tests may also be done to check for signs of infection or inflammation.

Treatment for pleurisy depends on the underlying cause. The primary goal is to relieve pain and inflammation. This can involve:

1. Addressing the underlying cause, such as treating the infection with antibiotics.
2. Prescribing pain relievers or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) to manage pain and reduce inflammation.
3. Using cough suppressants if coughing is severe and persistent.
4. Applying heat or cold packs to the affected area to help alleviate pain.
5. Taking deep breaths and coughing to help prevent complications like pneumonia and promote lung re-expansion.
6. In some cases, draining excess fluid from the pleural space through a procedure called thoracentesis.

It's important to consult your doctor at SunStar Clinics if you suspect you have pleurisy or if you experience severe chest pain or difficulty breathing, as these symptoms may indicate a more serious underlying condition.