

Usual Interstitial Pneumonia (UIP)

What is UIP?

Usual interstitial pneumonia (UIP) also known as 'fibrosing alveolitis', is a relatively common form of 'interstitial lung disease'. Interstitial lung disease is a condition that results in scarring of the lungs, due to damage to the 'tissue' of the lungs rather than the airways (bronchial tubes) Unfortunately there is no treatment for UIP that has been shown to be effective

What causes UIP?

The cause of UIP is unknown. It is believed that UIP results from an abnormal response of the body's immune system to something that is 'inhaled' or breathed in, but it is not known what this is

What are the symptoms?

The commonest symptoms of UIP are shortness of breath and cough

How is UIP diagnosed?

A biopsy of the lung is needed to make a definite diagnosis of UIP

A probable diagnosis of UIP can be made with a special CT scan of the lung, and in many cases no lung biopsy will be performed

How is UIP treated?

There is unfortunately no treatment that has been shown to be effective in UIP

Sometimes, your doctor may advise a short trial of treatment with prednisone or colchicine, however there is no good evidence that either of these are effective in UIP

- occasionally, other treatments to suppress the immune system may be advised by your doctor, including azathioprine and cyclophosphamide

There is a lot of current research to try to identify new treatments for this condition

What will happen to me if I have UIP?

The effect of UIP upon different people is variable

Some people will be severely affected and be very breathless doing very little, while other people will still be able to live fairly normal, active lives

Unfortunately, in people with UIP the disease will cause deterioration over time

some people may deteriorate quite quickly (within a year or two), while others may deteriorate more slowly (over 10 years for example)

Is there anything I can do to stay well with UIP?

YES – exercise!

Staying as fit as possible with regular exercise will improve your breathlessness and maintain your general well-being

A 'pulmonary rehabilitation programme' may be of benefit to some people with UIP to improve breathlessness and quality of life

What about lung transplantation?

Consideration for lung transplantation may be appropriate for some people with UIP who are severely affected with breathlessness and who are young and fit enough to benefit from this procedure