

Fast Facts

Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)

- Tiny elastic sacs in the lungs, called alveoli, fill with fluid preventing them getting enough air, which means that less oxygen enters the bloodstream
 - ARDS causes fluid to leak from the smallest blood vessels
- Usually, a protective membrane keeps this from happening, but severe illness or injury can damage it so it's unable to function correctly
 - Most often develops in people who already are critically ill and hospitalized
 - Develops within a few hours to a few days after the initial injury or infection
- Some possible conditions that can precipitate it are sepsis (a serious, widespread infection of your bloodstream), severe pneumonia (involves all five lobes of your lungs), inhaling harmful substances (ex. chemicals, smoke, water or vomit) or injury directly to your lungs or the part of your brain that controls breathing
- Other possible causes include pancreatitis, massive blood transfusions and burns (all of these alter your body's fluid balance and impacts its ability to function)
 - Intensity and severity of symptoms varies depending on the cause
- Can cause several serious complications, such as blood clots, collapsed lung (pneumothorax), other infections and scarring of lung tissue (pulmonary fibrosis)
 - Many people don't survive

<i>Symptoms</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Prevention</i>
-Severe shortness of breath	<i>Goal:</i> To improve the levels of oxygen and reduce fluid in lungs	<i>Complications:</i>
-Labored/rapid breathing	<i>Supplemental Oxygen:</i>	-Never start or quit smoking/vaping
-Low blood pressure	-Mask that fits snugly over nose and mouth	-Avoid secondhand smoke
-Confusion	-Ventilator	-Get vaccinated for flu and pneumonia yearly
-Extreme tiredness	<i>Manage Amount of Intravenous Fluid:</i>	-Ask for help with everyday tasks that are challenging
	-Too much fluid causes more to accumulate in the lungs	-Attend a pulmonary rehabilitation program to learn exercise training, participate in education programs and counseling
	-Too little fluid puts added strain on the heart and other organs, which can lead to shock	<i>Decrease Risk of Developing:</i>
	<i>Medications To:</i>	-Don't smoke or vape
	-Treat primary/prevent secondary infections	-Maintain a healthy lifestyle through a well-balanced diet and regular exercise
	-Relieve pain/discomfort	-Wash hands thoroughly and frequently
	-Prevent blood clots	-Disinfect surfaces that are known to spread germs
	-Decrease gastric reflux	-Avoid activities that have a high risk for injury to lungs or brain
	-Sedate	

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