

What Is Alcoholic Lung Disease?

Alcoholic lung disease is an umbrella term that covers the various lung problems caused by repeated alcohol use.

Over time, alcohol abuse affects the body's immune system and central nervous system, putting the person at a higher risk of disease.

Related to the lungs, this can include inflammation, infections, asthma, and more. In severe cases, alcoholic lung disease can be fatal.

The effects of alcohol may also lead to respiratory depression or impair saliva production, which can contribute to a risk of infection and lung damage.

Symptoms Of Alcoholic Lung Diseases

There are different symptoms of alcoholic lung disease depending on which particular complications the person is experiencing.

Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection in the lungs that can be caused by bacteria or viruses. Heavy drinking puts people at an increased risk of catching severe pneumonia.

There is more than one type of pneumonia, but they have fairly similar symptoms across the board.

Common symptoms of pneumonia include:

- cough that won't go away
- green, yellow, or bloody mucus
- difficulty taking full breaths
- chest pain
- fatigue
- fevers and chills
- sweating
- low body temperature
- stomach aches

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)

RSV is a respiratory virus that's common in people with weakened immune systems. It produces cold or flu-like symptoms.

If left untreated, it can develop into pneumonia.

Signs of RSV include:

- wheezing cough
- runny nose
- sore throat
- headaches
- shortness of breath
- fever

Tuberculosis (TB)

Tuberculosis is a bacterial infection caused by airborne particles. TB has the potential to be fatal among people with lowered immune function.

People with alcohol use disorders have a higher risk factor for catching TB and may experience more severe symptoms.

TB signs and symptoms include:

- long-lasting cough
- weight loss
- fevers
- chills or sweating
- excessive mucus, sometimes bloody
- fatigue
- swelling

Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)

ARDS is a severe, often life-threatening acute lung injury that can arise from lung infections, sepsis, a build-up of fluid in the lungs, and other traumas.

If you or your loved one experiences any of the symptoms below, seek healthcare immediately. The mortality rate for ARDS is higher among people who drink heavily.

Side effects and signs of ARDS include:

- difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- elevated heart rate
- low blood oxygen
- chest pain
- rattling sounds when breathing
- discoloration around lips or nails

Asthma

Asthma is a chronic condition that causes the airways to expand, leading to pulmonary obstruction and impaired lung function. Some alcoholic drinks contain histamines, which may cause symptoms of asthma.

Signs of an asthma attack include difficulty taking full breaths, wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing.

Treatments For Alcoholic Lung Disease

One of the most important ways to stop the progression of alcoholic lung disease is to quit drinking and seek addiction treatment.

Options like [detox](#), [inpatient treatment](#), or [outpatient rehab programs](#) can help you or your loved one lower your risks of developing a serious illness through alcohol's effects.

While some symptoms of alcoholic lung disease can be treated and reversed, it depends on how far along the illness is.

It's vital to seek healthcare as soon as any health problems arise to have the best chances of successful treatment.

Symptoms Of An Alcohol Use Disorder

If you are concerned that you or someone you love is experiencing alcohol addiction, there are a few key signs you can look for.

Signs of alcohol addiction include:

- trying and failing to quit drinking

- poor performance at work or school
- withdrawing from loved ones
- lack of interest in hobbies and activities
- drinking alcohol in unsafe situations
- needing to increase alcohol intake to feel the same effects
- experiencing [withdrawal symptoms](#) or strong cravings
- financial difficulties due to excessive alcohol use
- spending excessive amounts of time drinking or acquiring alcohol

If a person exhibits five or more of the above symptoms, they meet the qualifications for a chronic alcohol use disorder.

Get Help For Substance Abuse Today

If you or a loved one are facing alcohol abuse or drug addiction, you are not alone. To learn more about your addiction recovery options, reach out to us today.

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