

Related Illnesses and Pulmonary Hypertension

Scleroderma

Scleroderma involves the hardening of skin or organ tissue due to an excess of collagen production. The cause of the illness is not known and it is incurable. Roughly 150,000 to 300,000 Americans have this illness, and it strikes four times as many women than men.

Scleroderma can lead to PH because it can cause scar tissue to build up in the lungs, heart, or pulmonary vessels that run between the two.

Roughly a third of scleroderma patients develop at least mild PH. This form can often remain mild for many years. However, in some patients it progresses to severe PH, often before it is diagnosed and after it becomes difficult to treat.

Lupus

Lupus can cause inflammation of joints, tendons, and other connective tissue and organs. Approximately 1.4 million people in the U.S. have lupus. It affects women nine times more than men with most of these women in their childbearing years.

If lung tissue or lung blood vessels become inflamed, PH can develop.

About 4-14 percent of lupus patients develop PH. Studies have shown that more active lupus is associated with more severe PH.

HIV

Patients infected with HIV have a higher chance of developing PH. The time between diagnosis of HIV infection and the diagnosis of PH ranges from 0-9 years, with the mean interval of 33 months.

Scientists are not sure why HIV infection triggers PH.

Very few people with HIV develop PH, but those that do, may die from PH and not HIV.

Sickle Cell Anemia

Sickle cell anemia occurs as red blood cells change shape and can result in blocked blood flow and tissue damage. Over 70,000 Americans have this illness.

New research suggests that about 20 to 40 percent of sickle cell patients have moderate to severe PH.