WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IDIOPATHIC PULMONARY FIBROSIS (IPF)

WHAT IS IPF?
IPF is a serious, progressive lung disease, which means it gets worse over time. IPF causes scarring in the lungs, which makes them stiff and difficult to inflate. Lungs scarred by IPF no longer work like healthy lungs. They cannot deliver as much oxygen throughout the body.

CAN IPF BE CURED?
There is no cure for IPF. IPF is different for every patient. When the disease doesn’t change much it is said to be “stable.” When it gets worse, it is said to “progress.” For some people, IPF remains stable for many years, while for others it progresses quickly.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE IPF?
IPF is a rare disease and most people, including doctors, do not know about it. It affects up to 132,000 people in the United States, and about 50,000 new cases are diagnosed each year.

WHY DIDN’T I KNOW MY FRIEND/FAMILY MEMBER HAD IPF SOONER?
IPF is difficult to diagnose. That is because IPF may present similarly to other, more common lung problems. It may have taken doctors some time to diagnose the disease.

WHAT CAUSES IPF?
The word “idiopathic” means that the cause of IPF is not known. IPF may have been triggered by certain viral infections, environmental factors, or some medicines. IPF can be hereditary, so having other family members with it may be a risk factor. However, IPF does not occur in all people with these risk factors and a firm connection with these risk factors has not been found.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT IPF?
For other people’s stories about IPF, visit BreathlessIPF.com. To learn more about dealing with the challenges of IPF, visit LungsAndYou.com. And for extensive information about various types of pulmonary fibrosis, including IPF, visit PulmonaryFibrosis.org.
WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP A PERSON WITH IPF?
You can help the person with IPF by supporting his/her caregiver. Being a caregiver to someone with IPF can be challenging. In general, caregivers have less stress when they have support. In addition to the grief the caregiver is feeling, he/she is dealing with unfamiliar situations, which can add pressure and stress.

HOW CAN I HELP A CAREGIVER FOR SOMEONE WITH IPF?
Being the only caregiver is overwhelming and is not best for the person with IPF or the caregiver. You can help by taking on some of these activities on a regular basis or from time-to-time.

- Give the caregiver a break by taking care of the person with IPF for a short time
- Take the person with IPF to respiratory therapy or doctor appointments
- Help with chores, such as shopping, picking up prescriptions, or cleaning
- Cook a homemade meal
- Repair things around the house

A person with IPF and his/her caregiver will be grateful to know you’re there to support them in whatever way you can.