

Other subspecialties of internal medicine

Our focus on the respiratory system is similar to the focus of other internal medicine subspecialties concerned with specific organs, conditions, diseases, or age groups. Other subspecialties include gastroenterology (digestive tract), cardiology (heart), rheumatology (arthritis), endocrinology (diabetes and other glandular disorders), nephrology (kidneys), hematology (blood), hepatology (liver), oncology (cancer), infectious diseases, allergy and immunology, sports medicine, geriatrics, and adolescent medicine.



Clearing up some confusion

We doctors of internal medicine are also known as “internists.”

This should not be confused with “interns,” who are doctors in their first year of training after medical school.

Nor are we the same as “general practitioners” (GPs), or “family physicians” (FPs), whose practices may include surgery, obstetrics and pediatrics, and whose training is not solely concentrated on adults.

A public education publication from the
American College of Physicians —
American Society of Internal Medicine
(ACP-ASIM)*
representing

115,000 doctors of internal medicine and medical students.

190 N. Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106-1572
Telephone toll-free 800 523 1546, ext. 2600
www.doctorsforadults.com

*With support from the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation. 700100800

P U L M O N O L O G Y
INTERNAL MEDICINE
DOCTORS FOR ADULTS™

Your Internist is a Pulmonologist (Lung Specialist)



We specialize in the respiratory system

Pulmonology is the subspecialty of internal medicine concerned with diseases of the lungs and bronchial tubes, which often involves evaluation of the upper respiratory tract (nose, pharynx and throat) as well as the heart.

We pulmonologists must first complete seven or more years of medical school and postgraduate training and attain Board Certification in Internal Medicine. Then, for an additional two to three years, we study conditions specific to lung disease.

What we do

We pulmonologists are specially trained in diseases and conditions of the lungs and chest, such as pneumonia, asthma, tuberculosis, emphysema, or complicated chest infections.

When you need a pulmonologist

Not everyone who suffers from an acute or chronic lung disease needs a pulmonologist. Many of these conditions can be managed by your doctor of internal medicine. Our skills are usually needed for patients with complex lung problems, such as emphysema, tuberculosis, asthma, complicated infections of the chest, the pulmonary complications of AIDS, injury, and complications of respiratory diagnostic and therapeutic procedures.



Does a pulmonologist perform surgery?

No, major surgical procedures are performed by a thoracic surgeon. Yet we pulmonologists often perform specialized procedures to obtain samples of the lining of the chest wall or of the lung itself. For example, we use flexible fiber optics to see inside the air passages and extract samples of airway fluids and tissue for study.