

My workplace exposure checklist

A list of points to discuss with your doctor

If you currently work, or have worked, in any type of job where you may have breathed in hazardous dusts, fumes, gases, or vapours, it is important to discuss this with a doctor. Your doctor should be aware of these exposures even if you are not experiencing any symptoms as it can take a long time for an illness to develop.

This checklist is a guide to help you prepare for your appointment to share this important information with your doctor.



Where you work

Your doctor may not be familiar with your specific role, work duties or industry so it is best to be as specific as possible when describing your tasks and potential exposures.

- What kind of work you do** Describe what a typical day looks like and be as specific as possible. If talking about former jobs, include the approximate timeframes you worked there too.
- The kind of work you performed with hazardous agents or the ways in which your lungs were exposed** This includes the way in which any hazardous agents were handled including heating, burning, crushing, grinding, polishing, sanding, sawing, spraying and blasting.
- How often and for how long you are or were exposed to hazardous agents** During a typical work shift or work week, including shift times, and over your career.
- Hazardous agents you have worked with or near** It may be helpful to take any Safety Data Sheet (SDS) and/or Safe Work Method Statement (SWMS) if these are available to you.

Depending on the type of work you do or have done, hazardous agents could include:

- Asbestos
- Silica dust (e.g., rock, quartz or stone)
- Coal dust
- Dusts from hard metals or plastics
- Diesel engine exhaust
- Fumes from welding or solder
- Gases and vapours from chemicals, paints or solvents
- Organic dusts (e.g., hemp, cotton, grain, flour, or wood dusts)
- Mould, bacteria, viruses or other microorganisms
- Animal dander
- Other(s)



It may be difficult to remember or be aware of all the hazardous agents you have been exposed to. This is not an exhaustive or specific list of hazardous agents that can be breathed in at work but may help you remember, and your doctor may ask you about others.

Types of control measures used in your workplace to reduce your risk of exposure

This may include ventilation, exhaust, wet cutting practices, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (such as the type of mask you have been provided and whether masks were fit tested), shift times, changing clothes or showering before leaving work, or other measures that relate to your specific role(s).



Medical history

Involvement in health monitoring – if so, it is helpful to bring any results with you to your doctor’s appointment

Health monitoring involves regular check-ups by a certified doctor to monitor any possible changes in your health. Certain **hazardous agents**, such as silica dust, require your employer to organise and pay for you to undergo health monitoring.

Any symptoms you may be experiencing, including:

When your symptoms started

If your symptoms are better when away from work, such as when you are on holidays

If any of your work mates experience symptoms or have been diagnosed with an occupational lung disease.



Lifestyle factors

Any hobbies you have where you are exposed to hazardous agents

Certain hobbies or home projects can also expose you to hazardous agents such as home “DIY” projects or bird keeping.

Whether you smoke and/or vape or have previously smoked or vaped

While your smoking or vaping status does not relate directly to your workplace, your doctor is likely to ask about your smoking or vaping use. This may include the frequency of any current use, and your history of use, if any.

To fully understand your exposures at work, your doctor will want to know the same information about all your previous places of employment.

Talking to your doctor about your current and former work can take longer than a standard appointment. If possible, request a longer appointment with your doctor. It is recommended to bring a partner, family member or friend, as they can help you recall information and support you throughout the appointment.



Find out more

For more information on how to protect your lungs at work, visit our website:
lungfoundation.com.au/occupational-lung-disease/

[Lungfoundation.com.au](https://lungfoundation.com.au) | enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au | Freecall 1800 654 301