Possible IPF Risk Factors

The word “idiopathic” (id-ee-o-PATH-ick) means that the cause of idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis (IPF) is unknown. However, although the connection is not clear, IPF seems to occur more commonly in people with certain risk factors. There also may be some therapies or medicines that may cause damage to lung tissue that may lead to IPF. Below are some activities, medical conditions, and treatments that have been found to increase the risk of IPF.

Things that May Increase the Risk of IPF

Smoking	Even a past history of smoking may increase the risk of IPF
Environment	Long periods of exposure to asbestos fibers, silica, or grain dust
	Bird and animal droppings
Chronic viral or bacterial infections	The herpes virus is one virus that is suspected of possibly playing a role in IPF
	Certain bacteria may also contribute to lung problems such as IPF
Acid reflux disease	Also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
	One theory is that the scarring seen in IPF is due to tiny amounts of stomach acids getting into the lungs, but this has not been proven
Family history of IPF	IPF is known to appear in families, which suggests there could be a problem with a gene that is inherited
Certain Treatments	Certain cancer treatments, such as some types of chemotherapy or radiation
Certain Medicine	Certain types of heart medicine and a few specific, less commonly used antibiotics

Researchers are still working hard to find out exactly what causes certain people with these risk factors to develop IPF.