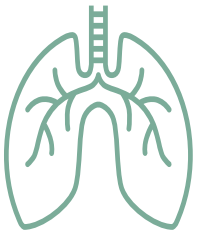


Silicosis



- > This decision aid can **help you decide** your next steps, including if you should keep working.
- > It is designed to be used with your doctors to help you make a **shared decision** about what is best for you.



What is silicosis?

- > A lung disease that happens when you breathe in tiny bits of silica (even smaller than those you see floating in the air in a beam of light).
- > Silica is found in types of rock, soil or the stone benchtop you work with.

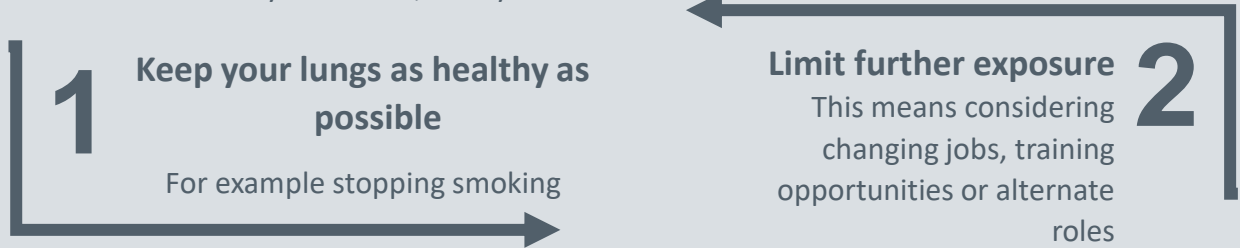
Is there any treatment?

There is no cure for silicosis. Treatment is focused on slowing disease progression. Significantly reducing lung damage is possible in the early stages.

It is hard for your doctor to know how much dust you have sitting in your lungs. It depends on **how long you have been exposed** and the **dust build up over time**.

What are my options?

Before the damage is sufficient to cause symptoms, here are two options to talk about with your doctor, family and friends:



Remember, unless you are experiencing high and intense exposure to dust in your work or advised by your doctor to stop work, **you have time to make a decision** that suits you.

1	Benefits of returning to work include (but not limited to):	Risks of returning to work include (but not limited to):
	Financial stability	Mental wellbeing
		More exposure can cause more lung damage or have faster disease progression.

2

Benefits of limiting further exposure include (but not limited to):



May delay disease progression



Retraining



Reduce or manage symptoms



Mental wellbeing

Risks of limiting further exposure include (but not limited to):

Silicosis may still develop or progress even if you have no more exposure

Finding an alternate role can be hard



Where can answers about these benefits and risks come from?

- > From expert doctors in the field.
- > The current evidence that is available.

When should I see the doctor and get further help?

Your doctor will schedule follow-up appointments. If you have any concerns you can ring and make an appointment, especially if you experience:

- > Change in your breathing, cough, wheeze or shortness of breath
- > Cold or discoloured hands and/or feet with a warm body
- > Aches and pains that you cannot explain

Questions to consider and ask your doctor before making a decision:

- What is the grade of my silicosis? Could it be something else?
- Will my disease get worse? What are the types of symptoms to watch out for?
- What other medical problems do I have to watch out for?
- Do I know enough about the benefits and risks of:
 - > Returning to work
 - > Considering alternate roles
- Do I have enough information and support to decide?
- What would I need to do if I want to keep working?
- A work colleague or friend has silicosis. The thing that concerns me the most is... ?
- What I find most concerning about my current situation is... ?
- When I'm uncertain about something I tend to... ?
- Where can I find out more about... ?
- Where can I have a vocational assessment?

For additional support contact:

- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Beyond blue on 1300 22 4636
- MensLine Australia on 1300 78 99 78
- Lung Foundation Australia on 1800 654 301

Around the world, research is being carried out which could help treat silicosis. If you want to be kept up to date, or participate in any research opportunities, you should discuss this with your doctor.

The information in this decision aid is provided for general information only. It is not intended as medical advice and should not be relied upon as a substitute for consultations with a qualified health professional who can determine your individual medical needs.

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