

# Focus On: Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS)

Acute respiratory distress syndrome, or ARDS, is a life-threatening lung problem.

Fluid builds up in the lungs, which makes it very difficult to breathe and lowers the oxygen levels in the blood.

ARDS puts a strain on the heart and can keep oxygen from getting to organs like the brain and kidneys.

It usually happens in people who are being treated for another serious illness or injury.

ARDS is treated in the intensive care unit, or ICU.

In the ICU, the person will get help with breathing and eating.

Treatment will also include heart and oxygen monitoring, fluids and medicines delivered through an I.V. (a tube attached to a vein).

Know that the ICU staff is highly trained to care for people with ARDS.

To learn more about ARDS, talk to your doctor.