

# Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis (HP)

Pragma

Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis (also known as Extrinsic Allergic Alveolitis (EAA)) results in inflammation of the alveoli within the lungs. We have seen number of these cases involving exposure to mould, metal working fluid and flour dust as well as chemical agents including isocyanates.

HP has been a disease prescribed by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council since 1964 when farmer's lung due to "exposure to the dust of mouldy hay or other mouldy vegetable produce" was scheduled.

The terms of prescription were extended in 1983 and 2006 and now include cases caused by contaminated metal working fluid and work in many different industries including plastic, forestry, agriculture and horticulture.

HP is also known by other names, depending on the source of the exposure, including:

Disease	Source
Farmer's lung	Mouldy hay, straw or grain
Bird fancier's lung	Avian excreta and bloom (dust from feathers)
Bagassosis	Mouldy bagasse (sugar cane pulp)
Malt worker's lung	Mouldy maltings
Mushroom worker's lung	Spores released during 'spawning' (the use of spores at the start of mushroom growing)
Ventilation pneumonitis	Contamination of air conditioning units

Currently, the most common occupational cause of occupational HP is inhalation of contaminated, aerosolised metalworking fluid<sup>1</sup>. However, it is recognised that new causes of HP are regularly emerging and over 100 substances have been identified as being associated with the development of HP.

There has been an average of 7 new cases of occupational EAA assessed for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit (IIDB) each year over the last decade (2013 to 2022), with about 15% of total cases being among women. As the disease only rarely progresses to a life-threatening level, it is likely that there are substantially more annual new cases than currently identified in the IIDB scheme or on death certificates.

<sup>1</sup>*Extrinsic allergic alveolitis: isocyanates and other occupational causes*; Report by the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council reviewing the prescription of extrinsic allergic alveolitis, isocyanates and other occupational causes; April 2016.

**Our team of experts can assist in providing advice and evidence in relation to HP cases including assessing the risk of exposure and providing advice in respect of knowledge and guidance.**

For more information or to speak to one of our experts, please contact Laura Hooper on:

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