Emerging treatments offer hope for patients with serious lung conditions.
BREATHE IN DEEPLY. EXHALE SLOWLY. IF YOU’RE healthy, you do this 20,000 times each day without even thinking about it. But each breath becomes a challenge for people living with cystic fibrosis, pulmonary fibrosis, emphysema, asthma and other lung diseases.

When patients with these conditions continue to get sicker despite all available therapies and medicines, a dedicated team of specialists at the Advanced Lung Disease Center at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas offers lifesaving options, including lung transplantation. For patients young and old, a transplant gives them a quality of life most never expected they could regain.

“Beginning in my early 40s, I had trouble breathing,” says Gene Peyton, 69, who had developed emphysema, a common form of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). “I could never get a full breath.” By 2000, he had quit his job and moved his family from Illinois to Texas, for the warmer, less humid air that made it easier to breathe. “My doctor finally sent me to Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas,” he says. “They gave me a double lung transplant in 2012 and now, I feel like my lungs are back like they were 20 to 25 years ago. Before the transplant, my breathing even made it hard to eat. Today, I can walk three miles a day, work out at the gym and work at my church. My lifestyle is great.”

At the Top

Baylor Annette C. and Harold C. Simmons Transplant Institute has been a resource for patients, their pulmonologists and other specialists from a four-state area, and Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas is one of the largest, most comprehensive

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Advanced Therapies for Serious Lung Conditions

Among serious lung conditions, the four most common that can require advanced levels of specialized care are:

- **Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD),** which includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis
- **Interstitial diseases,** such as pulmonary fibrosis, where lung tissue is scarred
- **Cystic fibrosis,** a genetic disease that causes a buildup of mucus in the lungs
- **Pulmonary hypertension,** where the blood flow to the lungs becomes compromised

Many of these conditions are not curable, but advanced treatments can often improve patients’ quality of life, says Randall Rosenblatt, MD, chief of pulmonary and critical care medicine, and medical director of lung transplantation at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas.

“We bring a great deal of experience in determining which of the new and experimental treatments we should offer our patients,” he says.

The pulmonary program at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas has been recognized repeatedly in *U.S. News & World Report’s* “America’s Best Hospitals” rankings as one of the top programs in the country and is the only program in the North Texas area ranked on this list.
New Department Focuses on Chest Surgery

The growing number of new tools, treatments and procedures in thoracic surgery has led Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas to create a new department of thoracic surgery and lung transplantation, a centralized resource for patients and their medical specialists and subspecialists. The team here focuses on a wide range of patients with non-heart-related conditions of the chest, including those with lung and esophageal cancer, malignant mesothelioma, swallowing disorders, acid reflux, emphysema and rare diseases of the chest.

“Like many other areas of medicine, advances in treatment and complexity of care have led thoracic surgery to become a specialty of its own,” says David P. Mason, MD, the first chief of thoracic surgery and lung transplantation at Baylor Scott & White Health. “This is in clear distinction from cardiac surgery, which focuses on diseases of the heart and its blood vessels.”

According to Dr. Mason, each field requires focused dedication to provide the most up-to-date and effective therapies. “The specialists on our medical staff spend their lives focused entirely on thoracic surgery and have received advanced training in this discipline. This allows us to employ advanced minimally invasive surgical techniques that usually provide a more rapid recovery. Additionally, we actively enroll patients in local and national clinical trials to provide them access to research for more advanced care.”

Innovative Approaches

Because conditions of the chest often overlap with other disciplines, the thoracic surgeons on the Baylor Dallas medical staff work closely with other specialists. At Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas, thoracic surgery is one component of a comprehensive treatment plan. A team of experts including thoracic surgeons, oncologists, pulmonologists, radiation oncologists, gastroenterologists, nutritionists and physical therapists work together to create a treatment plan that is all-encompassing. “This team approach is what makes thoracic surgery fulfilling to me. I am constantly learning from those around me. The enthusiasm, experience and expertise we bring together as a team allows Baylor Dallas to provide patients quality care,” says Dr. Mason. “Our goals for the future are to continue to build great relationships amongst all care providers, but most of all provide personal, compassionate care.”

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multispecialty transplant centers in the United States. On average, the lung transplant program performed a transplant almost every week in 2014.

According to the International Society of Heart and Lung Transplantation, this volume places the Baylor Dallas program in the top 20 percent of programs in the country.

“The lungs are the most fickle of all transplanted organs, since only about two in 10 lungs offered for transplant are actually able to be transplanted,” says Randall Rosenblatt, MD, chief of pulmonary and critical care medicine, and medical director of lung transplantation at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas. “With extensive clinical experience and a team of pulmonologists, cardiologists, thoracic surgeons and internists on our medical staff, our team is able to give patients a new lease on life.”

First Steps

Most lung transplants are performed in patients with COPD such as emphysema, followed by those with pulmonary fibrosis, and then cystic fibrosis. When they first come to Baylor Annette C. and Harold C. Simmons Transplant Institute, the team performs a series of sophisticated tests and therapies to diagnose
their condition, explore other advanced therapies (see sidebar “Advanced Therapies for Serious Lung Conditions”) and, if necessary, evaluate them for transplantation.

Since 2005, transplant specialists on the medical staff at Baylor University Medical Center at Dallas and nationally have used the “lung allocation score” to determine the patient’s place on the wait list for organs. (The previous system depended only on the length of time someone was on the list.) This scoring system allows the people who are the sickest and who will get the most benefit to get the lung first, no matter how long they’ve been on the waiting list, Dr. Rosenblatt says.

The average wait time once on this list is 18 months. One patient at Baylor Dallas received a lung within one week of being listed because his lung allocation score was so high.

Greater Expectations

“When I see a person – young or old – who has a terminal disease and is struggling to breathe, I know we have the team and the facilities to give him or her hope for a better life,” Dr. Rosenblatt says. “I know they’ll be able to play with the grandkids or return to school or work – activities they never thought they’d be able to do. This work is rewarding. It’s exciting for all of us.”

“WHEN I SEE A PERSON – YOUNG OR OLD – WHO HAS A TERMINAL DISEASE AND IS STRUGGLING TO BREATHE, I KNOW WE HAVE THE TEAM AND THE FACILITIES TO GIVE HIM OR HER HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE. I KNOW THEY’LL BE ABLE TO PLAY WITH THE GRANDKIDS OR RETURN TO SCHOOL OR WORK – ACTIVITIES THEY NEVER THOUGHT THEY’D BE ABLE TO DO. THIS WORK IS REWARDING.” – RANDALL ROSENBLATT, MD

POINTS OF CONTACT

For a physician referral, visit BaylorHealth.com or call 1-800-4BAYLOR.

For more information about the lung transplant process at Baylor Dallas, visit BaylorHealth.com/Transplant.