

Diagnosis of Hypersensitivity Pneumonitis

Diagnostic testing recommendations for nonfibrotic and fibrotic HP phenotypes, and guidance on which diagnostic pathway to follow, in adults with newly identified ILD.

2020 ATS/JRS/ALAT Guideline
Diagnosis of Hypersensitivity
Pneumonitis in Adults
ATS/JRS/ALAT Committee • Am J Respir
Crit Care Med 2020;202:e36–e69

GRADE

 Recommend (Higher Confidence)

 Suggest (Lower Confidence)

1 Definition & Phenotypes

Differential	HP must be considered in the differential diagnosis for any newly identified ILD.
Two phenotypes	Nonfibrotic HP (no radiologic/histopathologic fibrosis) and fibrotic HP (radiologic and/or histopathologic fibrosis) — separate recommendations for each.

2 Diagnostic Testing — Nonfibrotic vs. Fibrotic HP

NONFIBROTIC HP

 Suggest

Serum IgG for potential HP-associated antigens.

 Rec.

BAL lymphocyte analysis.

 Suggest

Surgical lung biopsy — only when all other testing has not yielded a diagnosis.

FIBROTIC HP

 Suggest

Serum IgG for potential HP-associated antigens.

 Suggest

BAL lymphocyte analysis (weaker than in nonfibrotic HP).

 Suggest

Transbronchial cryobiopsy.

 Suggest

Surgical lung biopsy — when other testing has not yielded a diagnosis.

Both phenotypes	No recommendation for or against an exposure questionnaire or transbronchial forceps biopsy — a validated questionnaire tool is needed; meanwhile take a thorough exposure history.
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3 Which Pathway to Follow

SCENARIO	APPROACH
Culprit exposure present	Follow this CPG — HRCT + BAL lymphocyte analysis, then multidisciplinary discussion (MDD).
No exposure, male former smoker > 60 yr	Follow 2018 ATS/ERS/JRS/ALAT IPF guideline — HRCT then MDD.
Other newly identified fibrotic ILD	Choice of pathway made case-by-case; initial steps are similar regardless, and evaluation may be redirected based on MDD.

Format note: "recommendation" reflects higher confidence that desirable effects outweigh undesirable effects; "suggestion" reflects lower confidence, mostly based on very-low-quality evidence. Condensed from the Summary of Recommendations.