Your Lungs and How They Work

Your lungs are in your chest. When you breathe, your lungs work to move oxygen into your bloodstream and remove a waste product called carbon dioxide.

Your lungs are 90% air and 10% tissue. The right lung has three lobes and the left lung has two lobes.

Your nose and mouth filter the air you breath to make the air warm and moist before it goes into your lungs.

The air then moves through a tube called the windpipe or trachea. The trachea splits into the right and left bronchus that are large airways that go into the lungs.

The bronchus divides into smaller airways called bronchioles. At the end of the smaller airways, there are air sacs called alveoli. Connective tissue around the alveoli holds the blood vessels.
The **diaphragm** is a flat dome-shaped muscle that separates the chest cavity from the abdomen. The diaphragm moves down or flattens when you inhale (breathe in) to expand the lungs. It moves back up when you exhale (breathe out).

The ribs protect and support the lungs. The lungs are covered by a thin layer of tissue called the **pleura**. Between the lungs and the chest wall is a small space called the **pleural cavity**. There is a small amount of fluid in the pleural cavity. If air, blood, or a large amount of fluid enters this space, the lungs collapse and it becomes hard to breathe.

**Gas Exchange in the Lungs**

When you breath in, your lungs take in oxygen from the air. When you breath out, your lungs remove carbon dioxide from your body. This is called gas exchange. The oxygen goes into your bloodstream and to your heart where it is pumped to the rest of the body. A **good oxygen level helps to keep your body working well**.

**Lungs with Disease**

The main job of the lungs is to bring air and blood together so oxygen can be added to the blood and carbon dioxide can be removed from the blood. Healthy lungs can do this well.

Lung disease or trouble with breathing can cause problems with the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. People with lung disease may feel short of breath and tired if their lungs are not working well.