

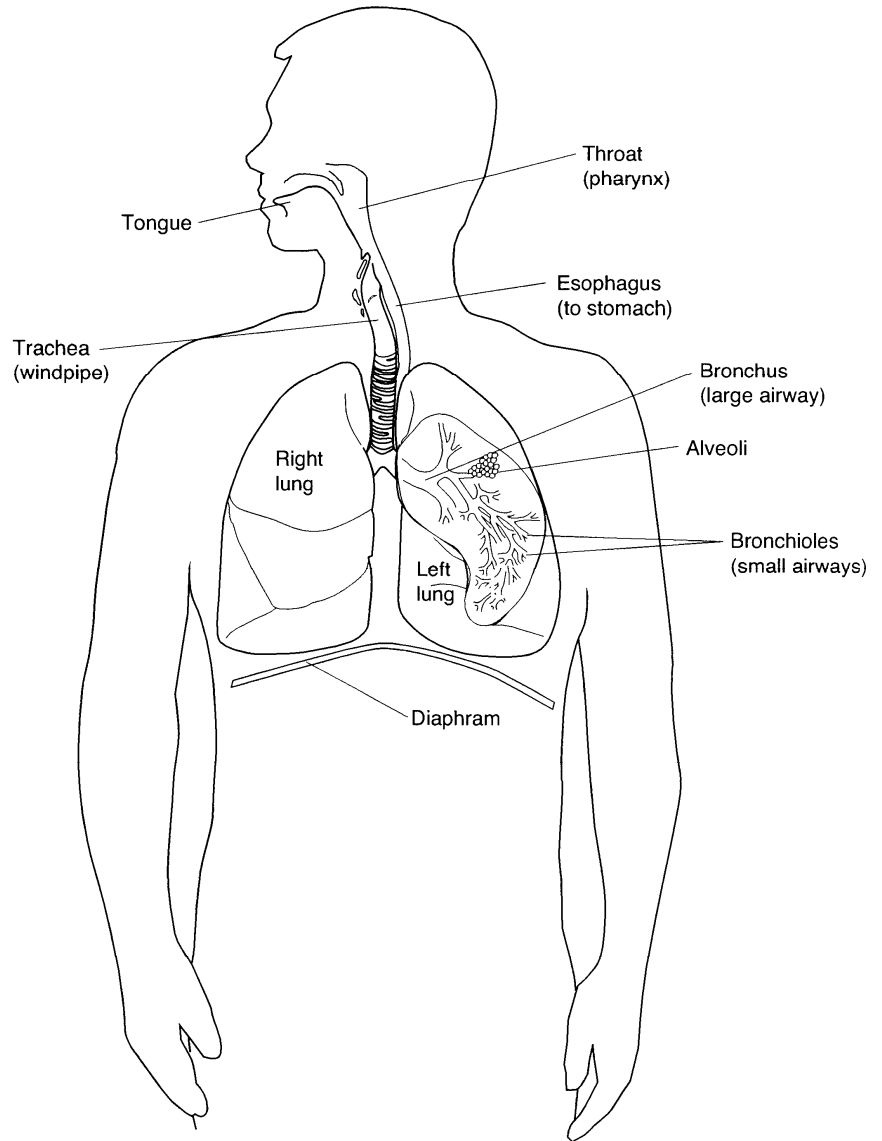
Your Lungs and How They Work

Your lungs are located in your chest. They work to let you breathe, getting oxygen into the blood and removing 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.

Air is breathed into your mouth and nose. **Your nose and mouth filter the air and give it heat and moisture before it gets to the lungs.**

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



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The bronchus divides into **smaller airways called bronchioles**. At the ends of these smaller airways, there **are air sacs called alveoli**.

Connective tissue around the alveoli holds **blood vessels**.

The **diaphragm** is made up of muscles and nerves. It divides the chest cavity from the abdomen. It pulls down or flattens when a person breathes in to expand the lungs.

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

Air Exchange

As you breathe, air in the alveoli is brought very close together with blood in the connective tissue. Blood from the entire body goes through the connective tissue of the lungs. This is where oxygen breathed into the lungs is exchanged for carbon dioxide. The carbon dioxide in the blood from body waste goes into the air sacs while oxygen from the air sacs goes into the blood. The lungs exhale or breathe out the carbon dioxide.

The oxygen rich blood goes to the heart where it is pumped to the rest of the body. **You need to have good oxygen levels to keep your whole body working well.**

Lungs with Disease

The main function 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. Lungs with disease do not exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide well. Persons with lung disease may feel short of breath and tired as a result.

✦ **Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.**