



Know the Facts: **What is COPD?**

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Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is a serious lung condition that can get worse over time. COPD can make it difficult for air to move in and out of your lungs. Though it cannot be cured, COPD can be treated and the symptoms controlled.

COPD stands for:

Chronic: this condition is long term and won't go away.

Obstructive: the normal air flow in and out of the lungs is partially blocked.

Pulmonary: it has to do with the lungs and breathing.

Disease: a serious health condition is indicated.

How do I know if I have COPD?

COPD is made up of two different conditions: chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Most people with COPD have both of these conditions.

The most common symptoms of COPD are:

- A cough that doesn't go away
- Trouble catching your breath after an activity; then feeling short of breath even at rest later in the disease
- Wheezing
- Coughing up a lot of sputum
- Feeling tired all of the time
- Chest colds that last weeks or come back frequently

Many times people have these symptoms, but don't see their doctor until their breathing is much worse. If you have symptoms, you should visit your healthcare provider to get a breathing test. This breathing test can actually find COPD early, before you have any signs or symptoms.

How can I control my COPD?

There are many things you can do to control your COPD.

- **QUIT SMOKING!** Cigarette smoking is the main cause of COPD. It is never too late to quit.
- Get a **FLU** shot every year and ask your doctor about getting a pneumonia shot.
- Wash your hands so you reduce your chance of getting sick from germs.
- Stay away from people who are sick. If a friend or family member has a cold, keep your distance. It isn't rude; it is a healthy choice.
- Stay active. Daily exercise is a great way to improve your health to help you feel better and stronger. Always check with your healthcare provider before you start an exercise plan.
- Eat healthy food. You may feel more short of breath after a large meal, so try to eat 4-6 smaller meals during the day. Fruits, vegetables, whole grain foods and lean protein should be part of your healthy diet.



COPD cannot be cured but the symptoms can be controlled.

If you think you have COPD, see your healthcare provider before your symptoms get worse.

More ways on control your COPD:

- **Practice Pursed-Lip Breathing. Sometimes in COPD the air gets trapped in the lungs. Pursed-Lip breathing can help get this air out and help relieve your shortness of breath.**
 1. Breathe in slowly through your nose; hold your breath for 3 seconds.
 2. Purse your lips like you are going to whistle.
 3. Breathe out slowly through the pursed lips for 6 seconds.
- **Practice Abdominal Breathing. This exercise uses your abdominal muscles to help get the air out of your lungs.**
 1. Lie on your back with a pillow under your head and knees to relax your stomach.
 2. Place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest.
 3. Slowly breathe in and out through your nose. You should notice the hand on your stomach moving up and down with your breathing. Try to breathe out twice as long as you breathe in.
- **Follow your healthcare provider's directions for taking medications. Here are some that you may take.**
 1. **Bronchodilators** relax your airways and make it easier to breathe. Some bronchodilators are taken daily to give long lasting effects and some are used as needed for quick relief. Be sure to know the difference.
 2. **Antibiotics** help to clear up lung infections. Remember to take the pills as directed and finish all the medicine.
 3. **Oxygen** will help you be more active without feeling short of breath.

Call 1-888-545-1710 to speak to a nurse 24-hours a day.

Disclaimer: Information or education provided in this fact sheet is not intended to replace medical advice from your healthcare provider. The information provided on this fact sheet is not all-inclusive of this topic.

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