

COPD

(Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

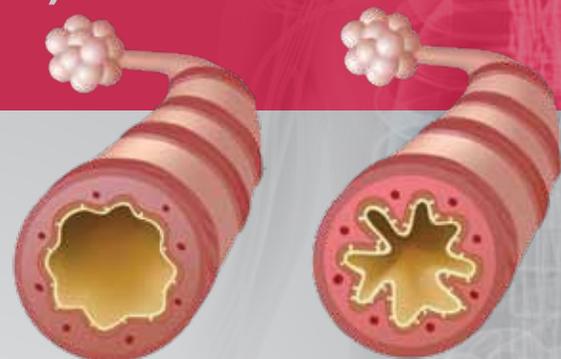
Patient Information

What is COPD?

COPD is a group of chronic progressive lung diseases that are characterized by diminished airflow, making it difficult to breathe.

In COPD, the following can occur and cause obstruction to airflow:

- Airways and air sacs become less elastic
- Walls between the air sacs are destroyed
- Walls of the airways become thick and swollen
- Airways are filled with mucus, which can clog them



What are symptoms of COPD?

Signs and symptoms may be mild at first and become more severe over time.

They may vary and include:

- Shortness of breath
- Persistent (chronic) cough
- Coughing up mucus/phlegm
- Wheezing — a whistling or squeaky sound



What causes COPD?

- Cigarette smoking and secondhand smoke
- Air pollution
- Genetic factors
- Workplace or environmental exposure to dust or chemical fumes



How is COPD diagnosed?

- An evaluation by a doctor may include a breathing test and possibly a chest x-ray.
- The doctor will perform a physical exam and ask about your medical history.



How is COPD controlled?

- Your doctor may prescribe inhalers and other medications to control your COPD.
- People with COPD should get the pneumonia vaccine and an annual flu vaccine. Other vaccines also may be recommended by your doctor.
- Oxygen therapy may be prescribed. Oxygen is administered through tubes in your nose or through a mask over your mouth and nose.



Lifestyle modifications

- Quit smoking. Talk to your doctor if you need help.
- Eat a proper, well-balanced diet.
- Exercise regularly. Talk to your doctor about physical activity that is safe for you.
- Avoid places where you may inhale dust, fumes, or other toxic substances.
- Work with your doctor to create and follow a treatment plan. Know what medications should be taken daily and what to do in case of emergency.



This information is intended for general reference only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.



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