



Understanding & Managing Your Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)*

*Includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both.



Living with COPD

You may have been told that you have COPD.* It is a lung disease that includes chronic bronchitis (brank-eye-tis), emphysema (em-fuh-zee-muh), or both.

You may not know much about COPD. You may feel scared and confused, but you are not alone. More than 12 million American adults have COPD.

You have taken the important first step by seeing your healthcare professional. The key is to manage your disease and live better with it. COPD cannot be cured. But it can be managed and treated.

Take good care of yourself. Learn more about COPD and how to manage it in this booklet.

COPD used to be thought of as an “old man’s disease.” Now, an increasing number of women have COPD, and more women than men die from it. Almost 70% of people with COPD are under age 65.

*Chronic (kron-ick) obstructive (ob-struck-tiv) pulmonary (pull-muh-nair-ee) disease.

About this booklet...

This booklet will help you learn about COPD.

The topics covered include:

- What is COPD? 4
- Asthma is not COPD 5
- What causes COPD? 6
- What are the symptoms of COPD? 7
- Know the signs of a “flare-up” 8
- How can you manage your COPD? 9
- Do you know your medicines? 13
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- Keep track of your COPD symptoms 15
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What is COPD?

COPD is a lung disease. It causes problems with your breathing. That's because your lungs:

- Have trouble pushing “used” air out
- May not have enough room left to take in healthy new air

COPD:

Chronic—long-lasting and doesn't go away

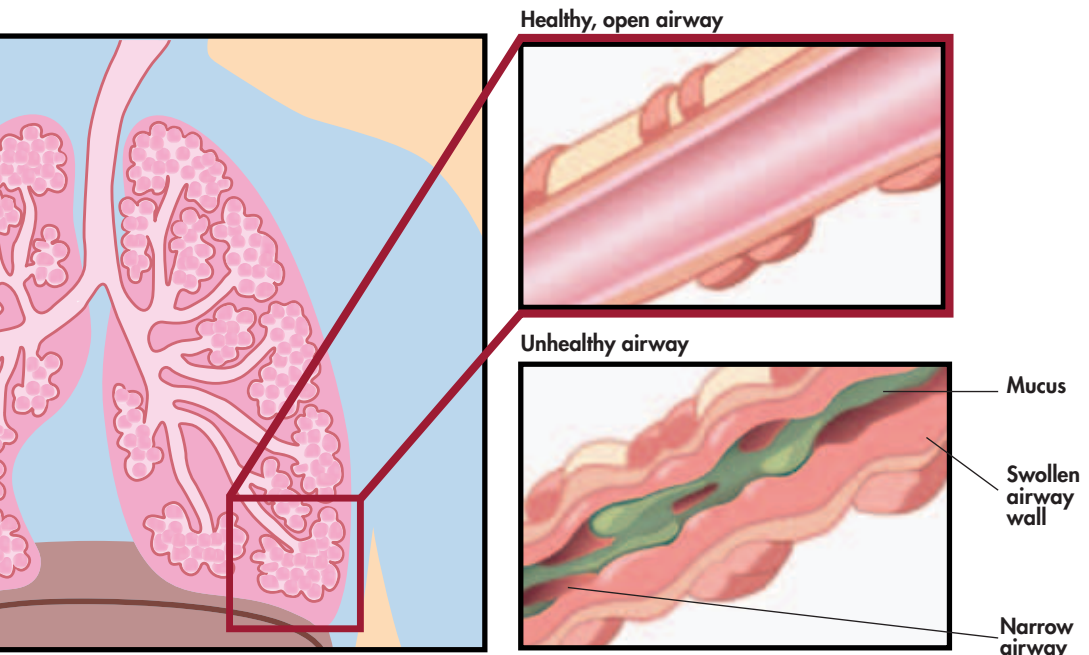
Obstructive—partly blocks the flow of air from the lungs

Pulmonary—has to do with the lungs

Disease—a sickness

COPD can include:

- Chronic bronchitis—swelling and, in time, scarring of the main airways in the lungs
- Emphysema—damage to the air sacs in the lungs



Asthma is not COPD

There are some differences between COPD and asthma

- When it starts
 - COPD usually starts when you are over age 40
 - Asthma often starts when you are a child, although it can start at any age
- What causes it
 - COPD:
 - Smoking or being around smoking
 - Working or living in an area polluted by dust or chemicals
 - Asthma:
 - Being sensitive to something (like a certain food or pollen in the air) that causes an allergic reaction
 - Being sensitive to nonallergenic factors such as infections, exercise, and some drugs
 - Having a family history of asthma
- When you have it
 - COPD is a chronic (long-lasting) disease that often gets worse over time
 - Asthma attacks come and go—you may have no symptoms between attacks

Asthma is also a disease that affects the airways. But it is a different disease. You need different treatments for each one.

What causes COPD?

The main cause of COPD is smoking.

There are other things that may raise your chances of getting COPD. These things include:

- Being around people who are smoking
- Working or living in an area polluted by dust or chemicals
- Indoor air pollution, especially from burning fuels in confined spaces
- Having had problems with lung growth and development
- Frequent respiratory (res-per-uh-tawr-ee) infections

Some of these things, such as problems with lung growth, you can't control. But some, such as smoking, you can control.

If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do. It is the only way to slow down your disease.



What are the symptoms of COPD?

You can have COPD and not know it. You may think you're just out of shape. You may think you're just getting older. But you are working harder to breathe. Lung damage happens over time and starts before symptoms appear. COPD symptoms can differ from person to person.

You may have one or more of the following:

- Shortness of breath
- Frequent cough with/without mucus (or "smoker's cough")
- Wheezing
- Fatigue
- Lung infections more than once a year

If you have chronic bronchitis...

You may feel like you have a cough or cold that won't go away. That's because your airways get tight, swollen, and filled with mucus. These things reduce how much air flows in and out of your lungs. That makes it hard to breathe.

If you have emphysema...

You may feel like you can't breathe. You may have a tight feeling in your chest. That's because, like balloons, the tiny air sacs in your lungs can get stretched out. Then they may break down. Air gets trapped in them. So, there's less room for air to get in when you try to take a breath.

Tell your healthcare professional about your symptoms so that you can get treatment right away.

Know the signs of a “flare-up”

Sometimes your symptoms may get worse. This is called a flare-up. These are times when:

- Your cough may get worse
- You may have increased shortness of breath
- You may cough up more mucus, or the mucus may be yellow or green

If you have any of these symptoms, call your healthcare professional.



How can you manage your COPD?

COPD cannot be cured, but it can be managed. You can do things that will help you feel better. These include:

Quit smoking.



Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do. It is the only action that may stop your disease from getting worse. Try to stay away from people who smoke, or places that contain smoke (like restaurants or bars), because secondhand smoke is bad too.

Keep a healthy diet.



With COPD, you need to eat well. The right food can give you energy and help you breathe.

Stay at a healthy weight.



Being overweight makes your heart and lungs work harder. It makes it harder to breathe. Being underweight may make you feel weak and tired.

Get regular activity.



Being active can give you more energy. Exercising can help make you stronger and help you breathe better.

Talk with your healthcare professional about what you should weigh. Ask him or her to help you make eating and exercise plans. Talk with him or her before you start exercising.

Get the vaccines you need.



They can help keep you from getting respiratory infections that can hurt your lungs. Be sure to get a flu shot each year. Ask your healthcare professional about the pneumonia (noo-moan-ya) shot.

Avoid pollutants.



Try to stay away from:

- Secondhand smoke
- Dust
- Chemicals

Try pulmonary (pull-muh-nair-ee) rehabilitation (ree-ha-bill-ih-tay-shun)

Your healthcare professional may tell you to see a respiratory therapist. That's another person who can help make a care plan for your COPD.

The plan may include:

- Breathing exercises
- Instruction on how and when to take your medicines
- Recommendations for healthy lifestyle changes, such as exercise and food plans

Follow your treatment plan just as your healthcare professional tells you. Be sure you understand what you're supposed to do.



Take the medicine your healthcare professional prescribes

Most people get many medicines to take. They work together to help control your symptoms. These are called:

- **Rescue medicines:** These are medicines that you can take to help you catch your breath when your usual symptoms suddenly get worse. This type of medicine:
 - Can quickly help you breathe easier
 - Works fast and lasts about 4 to 6 hours
 - Includes bronchodilators (brank-oh-die-lay-ters)
- **Maintenance medicines:** You can take maintenance medicines every day to help you keep symptoms under control. This type of medicine:
 - Works gradually
 - May last 4 to 24 hours
 - May help reduce the need for your rescue medicines
 - Includes bronchodilators that you take through an inhaler or nebulizer (neh-bu-ly-zur),* or as a pill or capsule
 - Includes combination medicines that you take through an inhaler or nebulizer

It's important to take your maintenance medicine every day, even if you are breathing well or feeling well.

Rescue medicines should be taken when breathing symptoms suddenly become worse. However, if you are using your rescue medicines every day to prevent symptoms, you need to see your healthcare professional.

*Inhalers and nebulizers are machines that you can use to take some medicines.

What you should know about inhalers and nebulizers

Inhalers:

- Let you breathe in medicine through your mouth
- Come in 2 kinds:
 - Metered-dose inhalers (MDIs)
 - Deliver the medicine when you press and breathe in
 - Are small enough to fit in your pocket
 - May be used with a spacer (a device attached to an inhaler that helps the medicine get to your lungs)
 - Dry powder inhalers (DPIs)
 - Deliver the medicine when you breathe in

Nebulizers:

- A nebulizer is a small machine that turns a liquid medicine into a mist. You inhale the mist through a mask

Talk to your healthcare professional about how to take inhaled medicine.

Do you know your medicines?

When you have COPD, understanding what your medicines do and how to use each medicine is very important. Use the questions below to check how much you know.

Do you have a prescription for a “rescue” medication?

- Yes No

Did your healthcare professional instruct you on how and when to use your “rescue” medication?

- Yes No

Do you have a prescription for a “daily use” maintenance medication?

- Yes No

Did your healthcare professional tell you to take these medications every day?

- Yes No

Do you take your daily medications every day?

- Yes No

Do you take other medications for COPD, such as oral steroids or antibiotics?

- Yes No

Did your healthcare professional tell you when to take these medications?

- Yes No

Do you talk to your healthcare professional at each visit to make sure you know when to use these medications?

- Yes No

Do you have any questions about how or when to take your COPD medications?

- Yes No

Bring your answers with you the next time you visit your healthcare professional, as well as your pharmacist. Reviewing them with a healthcare professional will help you manage your COPD.

Take an active role in your health

You may have many healthcare professionals who are involved in your care, such as:

- Nurses
- Doctors
- A respiratory therapist
- A dietitian (die-eh-tih-shun)
- A pharmacist, and others

They all help you manage your disease. You can also take an active part in your care. Find out what you can do to control your symptoms.

It's a good idea to talk to your healthcare professional about:

- How you are feeling and your symptoms. The more you tell them about what's going on with you, the more they can help. Be partners with them in your care
- When you don't understand something about your care, ask questions and write down the answers you get
- Anything else that bothers you. This can be something physical or emotional
- A breathing test called spirometry (spy-rom-ih-tree). It measures how well air moves out of your lungs. It's the same test used to find out if you have COPD and to help track how you are doing

You should also:

- Bring a friend or family member to your healthcare visits. He or she can help you remember your questions and what was said
- Refill your medicines before they run out
- Keep all your healthcare appointments

Keep track of your COPD symptoms

You need to know how your disease is doing. Then you can tell your healthcare professional exactly how you are feeling. That will help your healthcare professional decide whether your treatment is working. He or she can find out if changes need to be made in your medicine or treatment plan.

Use the *My Symptoms Tracker* on the next page to keep track of your symptoms.

Bring *My Symptoms Tracker* with you when you visit your healthcare professional.

My Symptoms Tracker

Month	My Symptoms: Check off the symptoms that have bothered you this month	Irritants or Things That Made My Symptoms Worse	Types of Medicines Used This Month
January	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other
February	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other
March	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other

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August	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other
September	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other

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November	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other
December	<input type="checkbox"/> Shortness of breath <input type="checkbox"/> Cough <input type="checkbox"/> Producing sputum (phlegm) <input type="checkbox"/> Wheezing <input type="checkbox"/> Tightness in chest <input type="checkbox"/> Weight loss <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sad or depressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Respiratory infections <input type="checkbox"/> Exercise <input type="checkbox"/> Changes in the weather <input type="checkbox"/> Indoor or outdoor air pollution <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to cigarette or other smoke <input type="checkbox"/> Exposure to things that cause allergies <input type="checkbox"/> Chemicals or other irritants at work <input type="checkbox"/> Worry or stress <input type="checkbox"/> Other/something else	<input type="checkbox"/> Rescue medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Maintenance medicine <input type="checkbox"/> Other

Get the support you need

COPD can be managed. You can do a lot to help keep it in control. And there are a lot of ways to get information and support.

Try contacting these helpful resources:

COPD Foundation

www.copdfoundation.org

Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD)

www.goldcopd.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

1-301-592-8573

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

The National Emphysema Foundation

1-203-866-5000

www.emphysemafoundation.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

1-800-232-4636

www.cdc.gov

Pulmonary Education and Research Foundation (PERF)

1-310-539-8390

www.perf2ndwind.org

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