

# Breathe

## CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

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### What is COPD?

**C**hronic ~ long lasting

**O**bstructive ~ blockage or obstacle

**P**ulmonary ~ relating to lungs & breathing

**D**isease ~ disorder resulting in symptoms

# Signs & Symptoms Of COPD

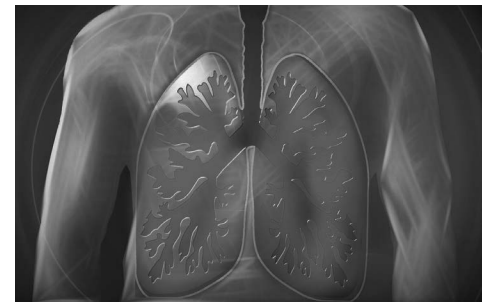
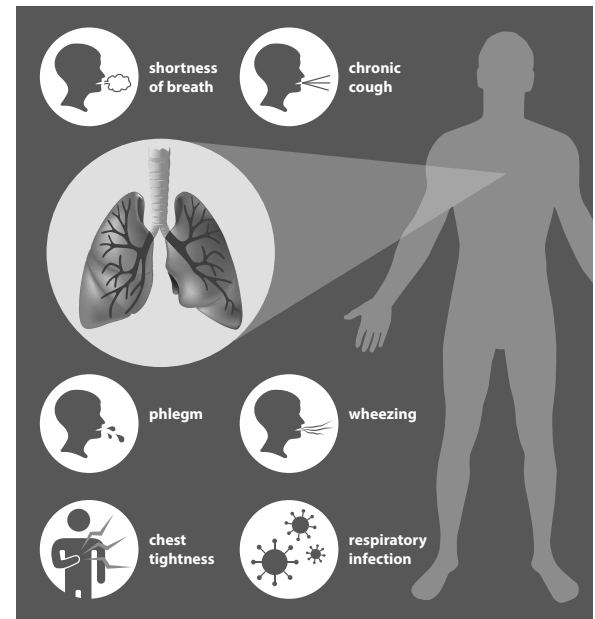
Getting to know the signs and symptoms of COPD is a very important step in managing this condition.

Symptoms may include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chronic cough
- Wheezing
- Fatigue
- Chronic Respiratory Infections
- Phlegm
- Chest Tightness or Pain

Early diagnosis may result in a better prognosis. Speak to your doctor immediately if these symptoms sound familiar.

*The severity of these symptoms may vary depending on the stage of the disease. Though COPD tends to progress slowly over time, flare-ups can occur, during which the symptoms worsen for a period of time.*



## Knowing the triggers and causes of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) can impact its course and progress.



### SMOKING

According to the American Lung Association, about 85 to 90 percent of all COPD cases are caused by cigarette smoking. When a cigarette burns, it creates more than 7,000 chemicals, many of which are harmful. The toxins in cigarette smoke weaken your lungs' defense against infections, narrow air passages, cause swelling in air tubes and destroy air sacs—all contributing factors for COPD.

### WHAT YOU BREATHE

The quality of the air that you breathe at home, work and outside can lead to COPD. Such irritants can include dust, second-hand smoke, pollution, fumes and chemicals.

Try to avoid breathing in the fumes from perfume, cleaning products and paint. A good tip is to use unscented products when possible.

### RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

Respiratory infections such as the flu (virus) or pneumonia (virus or bacteria) can result in COPD flare-ups. Viral infections create inflammation which can lead to secondary bacterial infections.

Your doctor may recommend that you get regular flu and pneumonia vaccinations to reduce your risk of infection. It is also helpful to follow good hand-washing hygiene and avoid exposure when possible.



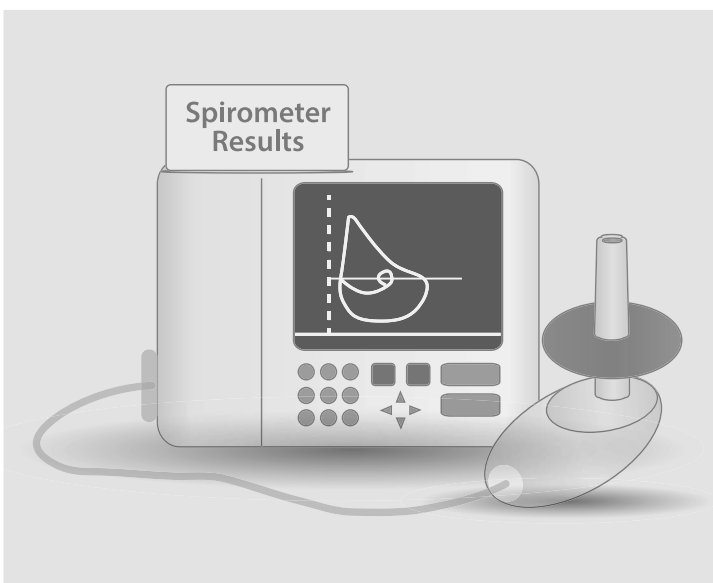
**KNOW YOUR TRIGGERS**



# DIAGNOSING

## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

To diagnose Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), your doctor will ask you about your symptoms, health history, conduct a health exam and review test results.



### TESTING FOR COPD

#### SPIROMETRY

**Spirometry is a test that measures how well your lungs work. You simply blow into a mouthpiece that has tubing attached to it. The results are based on the amount of air you can blow out of your lungs and how fast you are able to do it.**

SOME THINGS YOUR  
DOCTOR WILL WANT  
TO KNOW...

Are you currently or have you ever smoked?

Are you exposed to second-hand smoke, air pollution or chemicals?

Do you have shortness of breath, lots of mucus or chronic cough?

Do you have a family history of lung disease?

#### Blood Test

The Arterial Blood Gas Test measures the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide in your blood. This test can help determine the severity of COPD and whether oxygen therapy would be beneficial.

# Managing COPD

**Treating COPD takes an individualized approach. Depending on your health exam and test results, your doctor may recommend a treatment plan that includes medication, oxygen therapy, pulmonary rehabilitation or surgery.**

COPD is a progressive disease that can be managed through various treatment approaches. Your doctor will recommend the best approach based on your health assessment and test results.

## MEDICATION

There are many medications available to help manage COPD symptoms. There is no “best” medicine. Everyone responds differently because each person’s health and response to medicine is different. By taking the medication as prescribed, it may help you breathe better and reduce flare-ups.



## OXYGEN

When someone is diagnosed with COPD, they may need additional oxygen for their organs to function normally. Your doctor may recommend that you use supplemental oxygen at home. Oxygen does not cure lung disease, but it can help you feel better so that you can remain active and do the things you enjoy. Oxygen can help with your shortness of breath, so you feel less tired and sleep better.

## PULMONARY REHABILITATION

A Pulmonary Rehabilitation program usually combines education, nutrition advice, counseling and exercise training to help you manage your symptoms. The classes are usually offered in a group setting so that you get a chance to meet others with your condition. The goal is to increase your

awareness and strength. This will also help reduce flare-ups and hospital visits.



## SUPPORT

Finding support is another important part of managing COPD. Support may come in the form of family, friends, co-workers, healthcare staff and support groups. It may help you feel less alone and have someone to turn to during a difficult time. The American Lung Association offers COPD support options to help you connect with others.

**Lung Helpline (1-800-LUNGUSA):** this helpline is available 7 days a week and offers the assistance of experienced registered nurses, respiratory therapists and certified tobacco treatment specialists.



**SUPPORT GROUPS:** connecting with others who are experiencing a similar situation, can help you feel understood and less isolated. The American Lung Association offers many support groups. You can visit [INSPIRE.COM](http://INSPIRE.COM) to find the right group for you.