

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease



COPD affects an estimated 30 million Americans and was the third leading cause of death in 2017.

What is COPD?

COPD refers to a group of diseases that cause lung damage resulting in airflow blockage and breathing-related problems.

There are two main diseases that fall under COPD:

- Chronic Bronchitis
- Emphysema



Women are more commonly affected than men. COPD occurs most commonly in those ages 65 and older.

What are the symptoms of COPD?

- Frequent cough and/or wheezing
- Chronic excess phlegm, mucus or sputum production
- Shortness of breath, especially with activity
- Difficulty taking a deep breath

How did I get COPD?

- Smoking
- Chemical exposure (work related or environmental)
- Previous lung infections, like pneumonia
- Family history



What are the complications of COPD?

- Activity limitations, such as difficulty running errands, walking and engaging in social activities
- Low oxygen levels
- Special equipment needs such as portable oxygen tanks
- Depression
- Poor quality of life
- Other chronic conditions
- Increased confusion and memory loss

What can I do to live my best life with COPD?

Educate yourself:

Know the early warning signs of disease flare ups.

Make YOU a priority:

- Quit smoking
- Avoid secondhand smoke and other pollutants
- Discuss pulmonary rehabilitation with your provider
- Take your bronchodilators and other medications as directed
- Avoid lung infections by staying up to date on flu and pneumonia vaccinations
- Use supplemental oxygen as needed

Recognize and have a plan for setbacks. Try these interventions:

- Pursed lip breathing
- Breathing from the diaphragm
- Effective coughing
- Good eating habits
- Exercise

Call _____ at _____ with any of the following

symptoms: _____

My COPD Medications: _____

My oxygen Needs: _____

Date of last Flu Vaccine: _____

Date of last Pneumonia Vaccine: _____

See reverse for demonstration
Source: American Lung Association

Breathe easier with these techniques

Pursed Lip Breathing:

1 Relax the muscles in your neck and shoulders.



2 Sit in a comfortable chair with your feet on the floor.



3 Inhale slowly through your nose for two seconds.



4 Feel your belly get larger as you breathe in.



5 Pucker your lips, as if you were going to whistle or blow out a candle.

6 Exhale slowly through your lips for four seconds. Exhale normally, DO NOT force the air out. DO NOT hold your breath when you are doing pursed lip breathing. Repeat these steps until your breathing has slowed.



Breathing from the Diaphragm:

1 Sit or recline comfortably in a chair.



2 Relax your upper chest, shoulder, back and neck muscles.



3 Place one hand on your belly and the other on your chest so that you can feel the movement.



4 Inhale slowly through your nose. As you inhale, your abdomen should rise as your chest fills up with air, while keeping your chest as still as possible.



5 Exhale slowly through pursed lips. As you do this, your abdomen should fall.



6 Repeat.



Effective or Controlled Coughing:

1 Sit on a chair or on the edge of your bed, with both feet on the floor. Lean slightly forward. Relax.



2 Fold your arms across your belly and breathe in slowly through your nose.



3 To exhale: Lean forward, pressing your arms against your belly. Cough 2 to 3 times through a slightly open mouth. Coughs should be short and sharp.



The first cough loosens the mucus and moves it through the airways. The second and third cough enables you to cough the mucus up and out.



4 Breathe in again by "sniffing" slowly and gently through your nose. This gentle breath helps prevent mucus from moving back down your airways.



5 Rest.

6 Perform again if needed.



Tips:

- Avoid breathing in quickly and deeply through your mouth after coughing. Quick breaths can interfere with the movement of mucus up and out of the lungs and can cause uncontrolled coughing.
- Drink six to eight glasses of fluid per day UNLESS your doctor has told you to limit fluid intake. When mucus is thin, coughing is easier.
- Use the controlled coughing technique after you use your bronchodilator medication or any time you feel mucus (congestion) in the airways.