

# FOR A HEALTHIER YOU

## CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)

### WHAT IS CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)

COPD stands for **C**hronic **O**bstructive **P**ulmonary **D**isease

- **C**hronic means it won't go away.
- **O**bstructive means partly blocked.
- **P**ulmonary means in the lungs.
- **D**isease means sickness.

COPD is a common lung disease that obstructs the airways, making breathing difficult. COPD is usually caused by smoking or exposure to fumes or very dusty places. COPD can be prevented. When COPD develops, it can be treated, although it cannot be cured. The earlier it is detected, the better the results of treatment.

Adults may have COPD if they have trouble breathing, or a cough that will not go away. If you have these symptoms, you should ask your doctor about COPD. Doctors can help to improve your symptoms and slow damage to your lungs. Your doctor can help you do something about COPD!

Take time to think about your lungs.....learn about COPD!



LIVING HEALTHY WITH COPD

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COPD?

The symptoms of COPD are:

- An ongoing (chronic) cough
- A cough that produces large amounts of mucus
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chest tightness
- Wheezing (a squeaky sound when you breathe)
- Tiring easily
- Frequent colds

COPD symptoms usually worsen slowly over time and depend on how much lung damage you have. Your doctor will make the diagnosis by physical exam and special tests.

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### WHEN DOES COPD BECOME AN EMERGENCY

A COPD flare-up is a worsening of the usual symptoms of COPD. Many COPD symptoms can be treated at home, but there may be times when a trip to the Emergency Room is necessary.

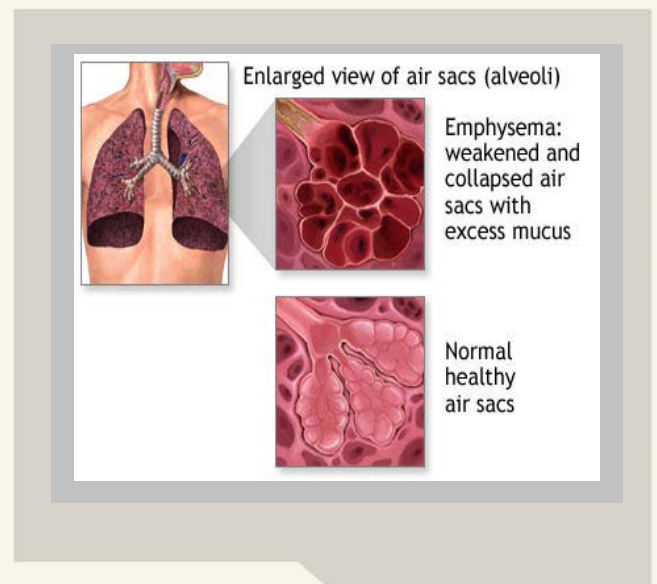
#### Patients with COPD should watch for:

- shortness of breath that gets worse
- more coughing
- an increase in mucus
- a change in how the mucus looks, such as change in color, amount and consistency
- new or worsening wheezing
- fever

Any one of these symptoms may be a warning sign. If caught early and treated, it may prevent a hospital stay. Contact your doctor for instructions on what to do when you have any of these symptoms.

#### Seek emergency help immediately if you experience any of these symptoms:

- you have trouble talking
- it is hard to walk because you are short of breath
- your lips or fingernails are gray or blue
- your breathing is fast and hard, even after you've used your medications.



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### HOW TO MANAGE COPD

- ✚ Quit smoking. It is the best way to manage COPD.
- ✚ Avoid irritants, fumes or air pollution.
- ✚ Avoid indoor triggers, perfumes, household products & pet dander.
- ✚ Wash your hands thoroughly and often to prevent colds and flu.
- ✚ Get a flu and pneumonia shot.
- ✚ See your doctor on a regular basis and talk about COPD treatment options.
- ✚ Follow COPD treatment advice — take your medications and use your oxygen as prescribed.

The leading causes of COPD are:

- cigarette smoking
- working in a polluted environment
- secondhand smoke

Most people with COPD are long-term smokers. Smoking cigarettes increases the risk of getting COPD. Exposure to air pollutants (breathing in dust, chemicals vapors, irritants, and fumes) can cause COPD.

The reason why some smokers never get COPD is not fully understood. Family genes or heredity probably plays a major role in who develops COPD.

**“The leading cause of COPD is smoking cigarettes.”**

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DON'T LET COPD KNOCK THE WIND OUT OF YOU.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION & EXERCISE

It is important to have a healthy diet.

Good nutrition helps your body to fight infections.

Exercising will make you less short of breath as your body becomes toned up.

There are exercises that are not hard, such as walking, and daily stretching.

Talk with your doctor before starting an exercise plan. Your doctor can provide information on a dietitian and physical therapist.

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