



Taking care of COPD

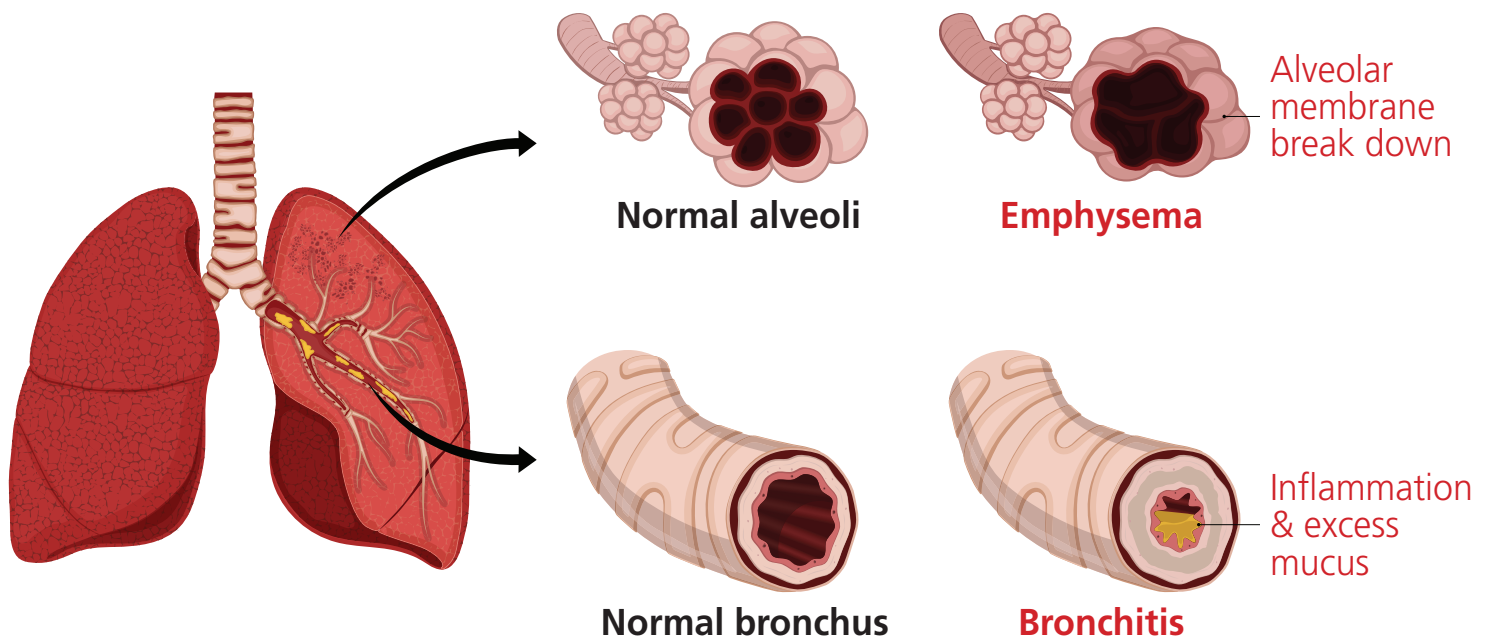
You have been diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). What does that mean for you? While COPD is a serious lung disease that worsens over time, your doctor can suggest treatment options and ways to help you manage COPD.

HOW DOES COPD AFFECT MY LUNGS?

With COPD, the airways in your lungs become partly blocked. It is harder for air to go in and out.

There are two main types of COPD:

1. Emphysema (damaged walls between alveoli, or air sacs)
2. Chronic bronchitis (swollen bronchial tubes with excess mucus)



HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM ASTHMA?

Asthma and COPD appear similar, but they are not the same disease. Most people are diagnosed with asthma as a child, and COPD as an adult. Unlike asthma, COPD can cause lifelong damage to the lungs. Treatment can help with breathing and slowing the disease.



WHAT ARE MY TREATMENT OPTIONS?

Your doctor may suggest one or more of these treatment options:



If you smoke, **quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for COPD**. Work with your doctor about how to stop smoking.



Sometimes with COPD you might need **oxygen treatment** to get the oxygen you need.



Medicines help keep your airways as open as possible. They may be inhaled or taken in other forms.



Lung exercise and education (pulmonary rehabilitation) programs can help you learn how to manage COPD and be active.

WHEN DO I GET HELP?

Call your doctor right away if your COPD gets worse all of a sudden. You might have:



- A fever
- Change in color of mucus
- Chest tightness
- More coughing than normal
- More mucus with cough

Tip: Make a COPD Action Plan with your doctor so you know what to do when your COPD gets worse. Share it with your family and friends.

Get emergency help if your medicines aren't working and:



- It is hard to walk or talk.
- Your breathing is fast and hard.
- Your heartbeat is very fast or irregular.
- Your lips or fingernails are gray or blue.

Tip: Have the information listed below somewhere easy to grab in an emergency:

- ✓ Contacts for your doctor and people you want to be informed in an emergency
- ✓ Directions to the doctor and the hospital
- ✓ Health insurance information
- ✓ List of medicines



HOW CAN I BREATHE BETTER WITH COPD?



Stay active and eat right to maintain a healthy weight.



Get a flu shot every season. Ask your doctor about the pneumonia vaccine.



Stay away from people who are sick. Wash your hands often. This can help you avoid getting lung infections.



Try to stay away from things that could irritate your lungs, like dust and strong fumes. Stay indoors when the air quality is poor, and avoid tobacco smoke.



See your doctor regularly. Work with your doctor to create and follow a treatment plan.

Let your doctor know what's going on with your breathing and ask any questions you may have.



Seek help from other people as you learn to live with COPD. For questions, education, and resources, please call the **American Lung Association's Lung HelpLine** toll-free at **1.800.548.8252** (interpreter offered) or visit **www.lung.org**.

Do you need more support?

Please call Alliance Health Programs

Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm

Phone Number: **1.510.747.4577**

Toll-Free: **1.855.891.9169**

People with hearing and speaking impairments (CRS/TTY): **711/1.800.735.2929**

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HE_MBRS_COPD 11/2020
HED C-1 REVIEW 03/2020