



Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

COPD is a serious lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. It is also known as emphysema or chronic bronchitis. People with COPD have difficulty exhaling air from their lungs, causing shortness of breath and tiredness.



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Quitting smoking is the most effective way to slow the progression of COPD.

It's never too late to quit.

Many products are available to help you quit:

- **Nicotine products:** These can ease cravings and make quitting easier. Use a nicotine patch with nicotine gum, lozenges, an inhaler, or spray. Most of these are available without a prescription.
- **Prescription medication:**
 - varenicline (Chantix) or
 - bupropion (Wellbutrin, Zyban)

It sometimes takes a number of tries to quit successfully. Many people who have had trouble quitting in the past have succeeded when trying again, especially with a support program and the needed medications.

**Get support and advice to help you quit.
Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)
or text QUIT to 47848.**

Visit [AlosaHealth.org/COPD](https://www.AlosaHealth.org/COPD)

for patient resources and more detailed information

What causes COPD?

Cigarette smoking is the most common cause of COPD. Some patients develop COPD without a clear cause, but this is less common.

Diagnosis of COPD

Early detection of COPD is important to get the most out of treatment. Shortness of breath, chronic cough, and chronic mucus production often occur in COPD. If you have any of these symptoms, see your healthcare provider.

COPD usually gets worse over time, so it is important to work with your healthcare provider to manage your symptoms and try to stay as active as possible.

What can you do to manage COPD?



Stop smoking

See the back panel for resources and support.



Get vaccinated

- ✓ Have an annual flu shot.
- ✓ Make sure you've gotten vaccinated against bacterial pneumonia as well.

Medicines for COPD

Some COPD medicines are taken every day, while others are only used when it is especially hard to breathe. Make sure you know when to take your medicines.

Medicines used in COPD include:

- **Bronchodilators:** These medications open up the airways and can make it easier to breathe. They are usually given in an inhaler device and sometimes in a device called a nebulizer. Some bronchodilators are taken every day to help the lungs function better, and others are used only when breathing is difficult (“rescue inhalers”).
- **Steroids:** These can reduce inflammation in your airways. They are usually given in an inhaler or nebulizer and may also be given as a pill for a short time if your condition gets suddenly worse.
- **Oxygen:** May be prescribed in situations where measured oxygen is low.
- **Roflumilast:** This can reduce inflammation in your airways when you are having lots of exacerbations.



Using your inhaler

Many kinds of inhalers are available, and you may need to use more than one type. To get the most from your medicine and to avoid side effects, it's important to know how to use and maintain each inhaler device.

- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist to show you how to use the device. Then show them that you know how to use it.
- Review the use of your inhaler with your healthcare provider or pharmacist at least every 3 months and anytime that your condition suddenly worsens.

Watch these helpful videos on how to use your inhaler:
bit.ly/Inhaler_videos

Exercise

Exercise may help increase your breathing capacity and give you more energy. Aim for 20 minutes per day at first and increase gradually.

Pulmonary rehabilitation

Your healthcare provider may recommend that you participate in pulmonary rehabilitation, or “rehab.”

This is a program that helps you learn to exercise and manage your disease with physical activity and counseling. It can help you stay active and carry out your day-to-day tasks.

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These are general recommendations only; specific clinical decisions should be made by the treating clinician based on an individual patient's clinical condition.

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