Understanding COPD

What causes COPD*?

COPD is a lung disease that affects your breathing. The main cause of COPD is smoking.

Other things that may cause COPD are:

- Secondhand smoke (being around people who smoke)
- Dust or chemical pollution where you live or work
- Problems with lung growth as an infant or child
- Respiratory (ress-per-uh-tor-ee) infections, especially if you get them a lot

What are some symptoms of COPD?

With COPD, you have to work harder to breathe. You may not know that you have COPD and think your symptoms are a result of being out of shape or getting older. While COPD symptoms can differ from person to person, you may experience the following symptoms:

- Shortness of breath
- Frequent cough with or without mucus
- Wheezing
- Fatigue (getting tired easily and often)
- Lung infections, such as bronchitis, more than once a year

*COPD stands for chronic (kron-ick) obstructive (ob-struck-tiv) pulmonary (pull-muh-nair-ee) disease, including chronic bronchitis (bronk-eye-tis), emphysema (em-fuh-zee-muh), or both.

Boehringer Ingelheim

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If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do. It may help slow your COPD down.

Smoking damages the cells that line your airways and lungs. Quitting smoking can:

- Stop more damage to your lungs
- Help you breathe easier
- Give you more energy
- Help make your home cleaner and healthier

Talk to your healthcare professional

It is important to be active in managing your COPD. Here are a few things you can discuss with your healthcare professional.

How does my COPD affect me?

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What can I do to keep it from getting worse?

_____

How can I quit smoking?

_____

What should I do if I have a flare-up?

_____

What can I do to help avoid other illnesses?

_____

Should I get a flu shot?

_____

Should I get a pneumonia (noo-moan-ya) shot?

_____

What medications should I be taking?

_____

How should I take these medications?

_____

Notes:

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