

# Talking About COPD



## Taking an active role in your health is important.

Talking with your healthcare professional is a great first step to learning about and coping with COPD.\*

### Before your appointment

Be prepared for your visit. Here are a few things you can do to help you get the most out of it:

- Make a list of all symptoms you have and any changes in your general health
- Jot down important personal details. Has a major life change happened since your last visit?
- Write down your medical history. Have you had recent surgery? Which medications are you taking?
- Consider bringing a loved one or a friend with you. A relative or friend can provide support and help you remember things you might forget

### What to expect during your appointment

If your healthcare professional thinks you may have COPD, he or she may recommend a test called spirometry (spy-rom-ih-tree) that measures the health of your lungs.

- You may also be given other tests, like a chest x-ray or a blood test
- You will have the chance to ask your healthcare professional your questions
- You can talk to him or her about quitting smoking
- Your healthcare professional may explain things that can help you breathe better, like taking your medications or doing pulmonary rehabilitation (pull-muh-nair-ee ree-huh-bil-i-tey-shun)

### After your appointment

Here are some tips to help you live better with COPD:

- Stop smoking
- Take your medicine as directed by your healthcare professional
- See your healthcare professional regularly
- Exercise regularly and keep your body strong. Eat healthy foods
- If your breathing gets worse, go to your doctor or to the hospital immediately
- Avoid smoke and fumes that make it hard to breathe. Keep the air clean at home

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

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## Talk it over

If you have COPD, there are steps you can take to manage your health. Here are a few things you might want to ask your healthcare professional:

What can I do to keep my COPD from getting worse?

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

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What signs of a flare-up should I watch out for?

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Should I make any changes in the medicines I take?

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What else can I do to reduce my COPD symptoms?

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How can I stop smoking?

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Do I have other conditions?

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What can I do to avoid other illnesses?

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

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### Here are some organizations that can provide you with more information about COPD:

**COPD Foundation**  
www.copdfoundation.org

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)**  
1-301-592-8573  
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

**National Emphysema Foundation**  
1-203-866-5000  
www.emphysemafoundation.org

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**  
1-800-232-4636  
www.cdc.gov

**Pulmonary Education and Research Foundation**  
www.perf2ndwind.org

## Your COPD medicines

Talk to your healthcare professional about what medications may be right for you. He or she may give you:

- A "rescue" medication to help you breathe better whenever you have difficulty breathing or when your breathing suddenly becomes worse
- A maintenance medicine that you need to take every day
- A steroid (stare-oyd) or an antibiotic (an-tie-by-ah-tik)

### Ask your healthcare professional:

How do I take my medication?

When and how often should I take my medication?

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