

Vaccinations

Vaccinations can help keep you healthy by preventing infections.

Influenza Vaccination

Since different forms of the flu emerge each year, it's important to get your flu shot once a year.



Pneumococcal Pneumonia Vaccination

A pneumonia shot is especially important for COPD patients.

Surgery

Certain surgeries may be an option for some COPD patients. Talk with your healthcare provider about whether or not you should consider surgery.

Lung Reduction Surgery

A portion of each lung is removed. This helps open up the airways, so air can travel through them more freely. This surgery can be done for some patients with emphysema. It may reduce symptoms, but it's not a cure.

Lung Transplantation

The lungs are removed and replaced with healthy lungs from a donor who has died. This surgery may be available for some patients who are very sick. If you qualify for this surgery, you'll be put on a waiting list for donor lungs. Patients who have this surgery must take medications for the rest of their lives to keep the body from rejecting the new lungs.

Quitting Smoking

The most important thing people with COPD can do to improve their health is to stop smoking. The disease progresses much faster when damaged lungs continue to be exposed to smoke.

Prepare to Quit

- Pick a quit date no more than 2 weeks away.
- Tell your family and friends you're quitting. Ask for their support.
- Ask your healthcare provider about nicotine replacement products (such as patches or gum). You may also want to ask about medications that can help lessen your urge to smoke.
- Join a support group or a stop-smoking program. Talking with people who know what it's like to quit smoking may help you cope.

The Day You Quit (and Beyond)

- Toss out your remaining cigarettes, ashtrays, and lighters.
- Drink more water and juice, but stay away from alcohol and caffeine.
- Chew sugarless gum to curb your hunger or food cravings.
- Plan a special celebration for yourself. Eat your favorite meal, go to a movie, or spend time with a nonsmoking friend.
- Ask friends and family not to smoke around you. Try to avoid places where smoking is allowed.

Avoid Irritants

Breathe easier by staying away from the following:

- Cigarette smoke
- Dust
- Air pollution
- Work-related fumes
- Excessive heat or cold
- High altitudes
- People who have a cold or flu

Breathing Exercises

Pursed-Lip Breathing

Pursed-lip breathing allows more air to enter your lungs and requires less energy. It will help you feel better and conserve energy.

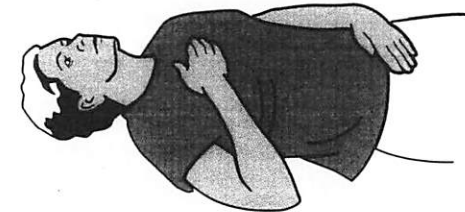


1. Inhale slowly through your nose until your lungs are full.
 2. Purse your lips as if you were going to whistle or give someone a kiss.
 3. Breathe out slowly while keeping your lips pursed.
- Time your breaths so that you spend twice as long breathing out as you do breathing in.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

The major muscle used in breathing is your diaphragm. With COPD, your lungs swell up with trapped air and flatten out this muscle. A flattened, weakened diaphragm makes it hard to breathe. This exercise will strengthen your diaphragm and make breathing easier.

1. Lie on your back with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. (The carpet is the best place, but a firm bed works, too.)
2. Place one hand on your stomach just below your belly button and the other on the middle of your chest.



3. Inhale and exhale using pursed-lip breathing.
4. As you inhale through your nose, keep your upper chest as still as possible and make your stomach move out.
5. As you exhale, let your stomach fall inward while keeping your chest still. Watch your hands. Make sure that the hand on your stomach rises and falls with your breath and that the hand on your chest stays still.

There is no cure for COPD. However, there are many treatments available to help lessen its effects on your life.

Medications

Medication is an important part of COPD management. Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you have any questions about your medications. Some medications that are often prescribed include:

Bronchodilators

Bronchodilators can be inhaled or taken orally. They relax and open up the air passages in your lungs to help improve breathing. Inhaled forms are usually prescribed first because they can give relief within 15 to 20 minutes.

Corticosteroids

Corticosteroids can reduce inflammation and swelling in the airways. They can also reduce mucus production and decrease sensitivity of airways to irritants and allergens.

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are used to treat infections when they occur. They are not taken continuously. Infections are common in patients with COPD.

Expectorants

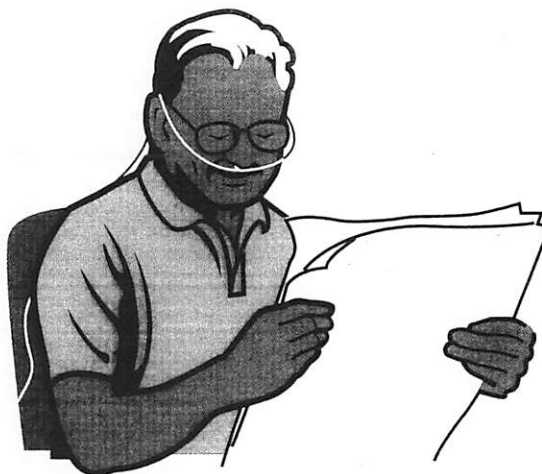
Expectorants help loosen the mucus in your airways, so more can be expelled when you cough. This may make breathing easier.

Alpha-1-Protease Inhibitor

This drug may slow the progression of emphysema in patients with A1AD. It is used only by patients who develop emphysema from genetic factors.

Oxygen Therapy

COPD limits your ability to take in oxygen-rich air. Oxygen therapy increases the level of oxygen in the air you breathe. This may allow you to be more active and comfortable.



The Right System for You

There are 3 options available for patients who need supplemental oxygen. Each has its pluses and minuses. Your healthcare provider may recommend more than one type depending on your specific needs.

1. Concentrators

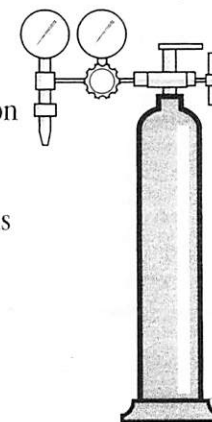
Concentrators plug into the wall and take oxygen from the room air.

- Don't require refilling
- Are convenient for home use
- Can be noisy
- Can add to monthly electricity bill
- Are not portable
- Require a backup system in case of a power outage

2. Compressed Gas Systems

Compressed gas systems are metal tanks filled with oxygen gas and are available in several sizes.

- Usually the least expensive option
- Most widely available
- Less portable than liquid systems
- Require frequent refillings



3. Liquid Systems

Liquid systems hold oxygen in a liquid form. They have two parts: a large container that you keep at home, and a portable, lighter tank you can refill.

- Portable unit is lightweight
- Allow for a more active lifestyle
- More expensive

Oxygen Safety

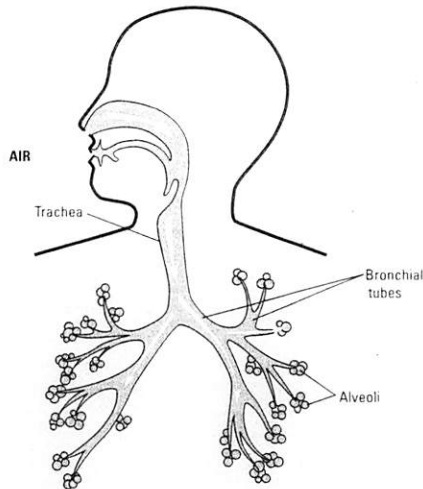
You need to take certain safety precautions when using oxygen. Oxygen can make fire burn hotter and faster. So, it's important to reduce the chances of fire when you're using oxygen. Make sure you and anyone who lives with you or helps care for you understands how to use your equipment. Also, follow these safety tips:

- Never set the oxygen flow rate higher than the rate prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- There should be no smoking in a room where oxygen is being used.
- Keep your tank at least 5 feet away from any open flames.
- Keep your tank at least 5 feet away from any electrical equipment that may spark.

What Is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a combination of diseases that make breathing difficult. Emphysema and chronic bronchitis are the two main diseases that together make up COPD. COPD limits your ability to exhale stale, oxygen-poor air from your lungs. When you can't exhale all of the stale air in your lungs, there isn't enough room for oxygen-rich air to enter the next time you breathe in.

How Your Lungs Work

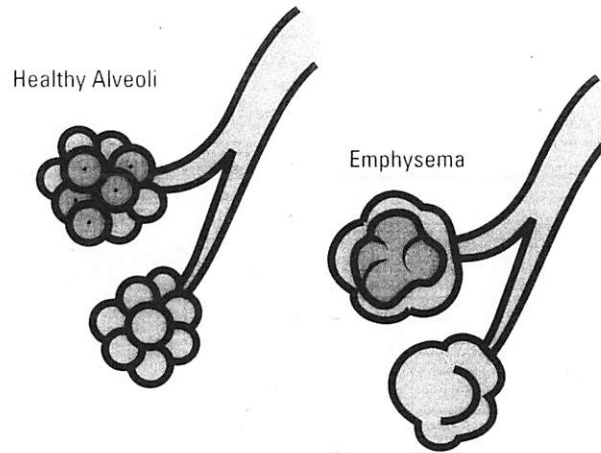


Your airways are shaped like the roots of a tree.

1. When you inhale, oxygen-rich air travels in through your mouth and nose and down your windpipe (the trachea).
2. The air travels through a series of smaller and smaller branches (bronchial tubes).
3. The air reaches the tiny air sacs (alveoli) in your lungs.
4. There, oxygen is transferred from the air in your lungs to your blood, which will carry it throughout your body.
5. You exhale the air, which is now oxygen-poor, from your lungs.

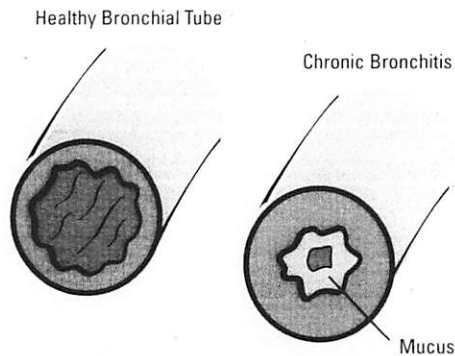
Emphysema

Emphysema causes permanent damage by weakening and breaking the alveoli in the lungs. When several alveoli near each other collapse, a large space forms, trapping oxygen-poor air that needs to be exhaled.



Chronic Bronchitis*

This condition refers to long-term scarring and thickening of the walls of the bronchial tubes. Your body makes too much mucus (a thick, sticky coating) to soothe the bronchial tubes. This narrows your airways even more.



**Unlike acute bronchitis, chronic bronchitis develops over a lifetime and does not go away with time.*

Avoiding certain risk factors can help keep your airways healthier longer. By slowing the progression of COPD, you will be able to do more and feel better.

Risk Factors You Can Control

Smoking: Smoking is the number 1 cause of COPD. Long-term smoking accounts for 80–90% of all cases of COPD. Continuing to smoke with COPD will damage your airways even more.

Secondhand smoke: Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke for long periods of time also have an increased risk of developing COPD. Exposure to secondhand smoke for patients with COPD irritates their airways and speeds the progression of COPD.

Environmental pollutants: Breathing in harmful pollutants at work or in the environment can increase your chances of developing COPD and worsen its effects.

Your local or county health services department may be able to tell you if there are businesses or industries near your home that use harmful chemicals, or if there are harmful pollutants associated with your job.

Airborne chemicals to avoid include: lead, mercury, coal dust, and hydrogen sulfide (a byproduct found at fuel refineries).

It is also a good idea to stay indoors on days when there an ozone or smog alert in effect.

Risk Factors You Can't Control

- History of frequent upper respiratory infections.
- Pneumonia during childhood.
- Heredity: There is an inherited form of emphysema called alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency (A1AD). With A1AD, the body itself breaks down the tiny air sacs in your lungs. Avoiding other risk factors can slow the progression of the disease and the development of emphysema in patients with A1AD.

Aerobic and Strengthening Exercises

Exercise is good for everyone, including people with COPD. Regular exercise “teaches” our muscles to use the oxygen we breathe more efficiently. “Trained” muscles can do more with less oxygen and give you more energy to perform your daily activities. Check with your healthcare provider before beginning an exercise program.

“Warm Up” Your Lungs (See Breathing Exercises)

Start with **pursed-lip breathing** for a few minutes. Continue using pursed-lip breathing while you exercise.

Recommended Exercises:

- **Walking** 3 or 4 times a day for 5 to 15 minutes at a time.
- **Swimming** is a great option. Many people with COPD find it easier to breathe the humid air around a pool. Simply lifting your arms and legs in the water can build strength and counts as exercise. You don’t have to swim laps!
- **Strengthening exercises** for your upper body can be especially useful. When the muscles used for breathing get stronger, breathing becomes easier. Try lifting light weights (such as soup cans) 10 times in a row.



Manage Your Time and Energy

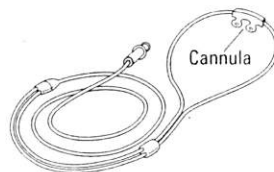
Here are a few energy-saving ideas:

- When you know a task will take a long time, take breaks and continue only when your energy has returned.
- Use paper plates when appropriate to eliminate the need to wash dishes.
- Keep cleaning supplies on a utility cart with wheels that travels with you from room to room as you clean.
- Bring a travel bag on rollers when you go shopping.

Eat Healthy Foods

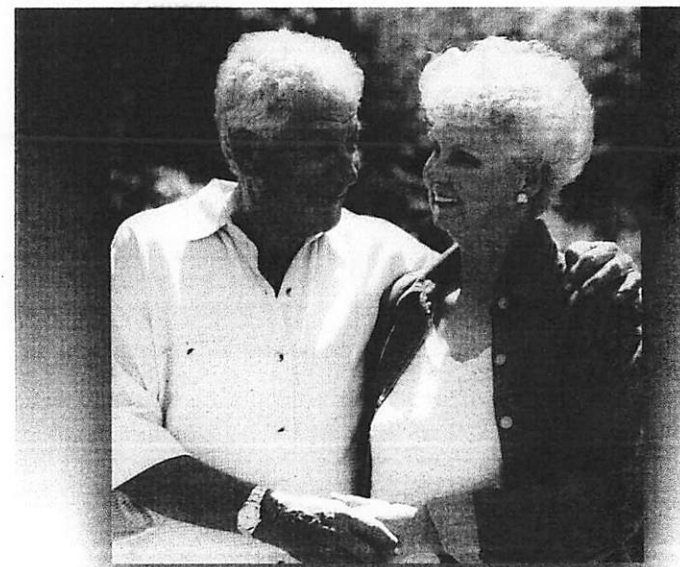
Since COPD makes breathing so much harder, the muscles you use to breathe can use up to 10 times as much energy as a healthy person’s muscles. This is why it’s so important to eat properly.

- Avoid foods that make you feel bloated.
- Try eating 6 smaller meals a day instead of 3 large ones.
- Limit your intake of caffeinated drinks.
- If you use oxygen, wear your cannula while eating.
- Choose foods that are easy to prepare.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day (unless your healthcare provider says otherwise).
- Limit your salt intake.
- Eat your main meal early in the day.



Managing COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease



- *COPD Basics*
- *Risk Factors*
- *Treatment Options*
- *Living with COPD*



For Patients Using Oxygen Therapy

You may need to increase your oxygen flow rate during exercise.

Stop exercising immediately if:

- You become nauseated or dizzy.
- You become seriously short of breath.
- You experience pain.

Call your healthcare provider if any of these symptoms do not go away.

The information in this guide has been accumulated from current medical literature and is generally accepted by the medical community at this time. However, this information is not meant as a substitute for personal medical advice. If you have worrisome symptoms or conditions, contact a physician immediately.

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staywell



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