



The Breathing Association was founded in 1906. We serve the community as the leading resource for promoting lung health and preventing lung disease through education, detection, and service. Please contact The Breathing Association if you would like more information on COPD, Bronchitis, Emphysema or Senior Outreach Services for persons with COPD.

Also call us about:

- Asthma Management Services
- Smoking Cessation – Quit for Good
- Tobacco Prevention
- Lung Health Medical Supplies
- Energy Assistance

The Senior Outreach Coordinator is available to individuals, families and organizations. For free COPD assessments and home based education, to receive a Better Breathing Club newsletter, join a Better Breathing Club support group, or for information on the early alert calls for “Dirty Air” call The Breathing Association at (614) 457-4570.



1520 Old Henderson Road
Columbus, OH 43220

www.BreathingAssociation.org

PH: 614.457.4570
Fax: 614.457.3777



COPD
**Chronic Obstructive
Pulmonary Disease**



Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

is a slowly progressive disease of the airways that is characterized by a gradual loss of lung function. COPD includes chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or combinations of these conditions. It is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States

Emphysema:

Emphysema causes a loss of elasticity in the diaphragm (major muscle of breathing) and in the small air sacs (alveoli) that line the lungs. Eventually, the walls stretch and break, creating larger, less efficient air sacs that cannot handle the normal exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide.

When emphysema is advanced, the work of breathing can consume up to 20% of your resting energy. Unfortunately, because emphysema develops gradually over many years, symptoms may not occur until irreversible damage has taken place. Treatments focus on relieving symptoms and avoiding complications.

Chronic Bronchitis:

Chronic bronchitis is an inflammation, or irritation of the airways in the lungs. When bronchial tubes (airways) are irritated, thick mucus gets into the tubes. The mucus blocks the airways and makes it hard to get air into the lungs. Symptoms of chronic bronchitis include a cough that creates more mucus (sometimes called sputum), troubled breathing and a feeling of tightness in the chest.

Symptoms of COPD can range from chronic cough and mucus production to severe disabling shortness of breath. In some individuals, chronic cough and sputum production are the first signs that they are at risk for developing the airflow obstruction and

shortness of breath characteristic of COPD. In others, shortness of breath may be the first indication of the disease.

The most important risk factor for COPD in the U.S. by far, is cigarette smoking. Pipe, cigar, other types of tobacco smoking, and exposure to second hand smoke are also risk factors. Other documented causes of COPD include occupational dusts and chemicals. Outdoor air pollution adds to the total burden of inhaled particles in the lungs, but its role in causing COPD is uncertain. The most important measure for preventing COPD - and for stopping the progression of the disease is to stop smoking/ avoid secondhand smoke.

Diagnosis of COPD is confirmed by the presence of airway obstruction on testing with spirometry, sputum analysis, arterial blood gas sampling (ABG's), and/or chest X-ray. There is no known cure for COPD at the present time. Treatment is usually supportive and designed to relieve symptoms and improve quality of life.

If you are a smoker or a former smoker, ask your doctor about taking a pulmonary function test.

With continued exposure to cigarettes or small particle pollution, the disease progresses and individuals with COPD increasingly lose their ability to breathe. Acute infections or certain weather conditions may temporarily worsen symptoms, occasionally hospitalization may be required.

Treatment for COPD may include bronchodilators to relax the airways and thin mucus, inhaled steroids, surgery, supplemental oxygen and antibiotics to treat infections.

In addition, a person with COPD may make lifestyle changes to help control the disease. These may include: avoiding airborne pollutants, improving nutrition, increasing fluid intake, avoiding the outdoors on extremely hot or cold days, and maintaining an active daily routine.

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a preventative health care measure that may include medical management, education, emotional support, exercise, breathing retraining, and nutritional counseling.

The purpose of pulmonary rehabilitation is to help people lead a full, satisfying life; to restore them to their highest possible functional capacity; and to help them live a more comfortable and enjoyable life.

Prevention:

The best way to prevent COPD is to stay away from smoke - don't smoke and stay away from secondhand smoke. In addition, avoid polluted areas, wear a protective mask when exposed to weather extremes or work related pollutants, and treat acute lung problems quickly and properly.



1520 Old Henderson Road
Columbus, OH 43220

www.BreathingAssociation.org