

What Else Can You Do to Improve Your Health?

- Quit smoking
- Avoid cigarettes and e-cigarettes
- Avoid secondhand smoke
- Wear appropriate respiratory protection when working around fumes
- Eat a healthy diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Get enough rest
- Stay positive and reduce stress



Stay Current on all Immunizations

It is important to fight any viruses with immunizations and good health.

- Get a flu shot every year
- Get vaccinated against pneumonia

Go to the [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) website for current medical concerns in your area and recommended steps.



Follow the steps in your action plan, if your provider has given you one

People with COPD can Live Life Fully



More information on COPD

National Heart Lung and Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

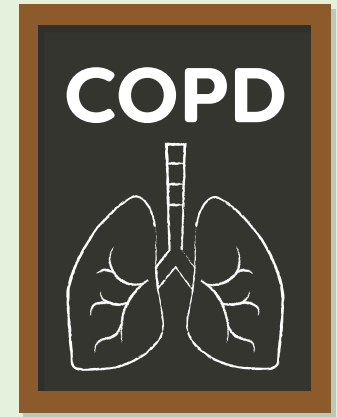
www.cdc.gov/copd

This brochure is provided for informational or educational purposes only and does not substitute professional medical advice or consultations with healthcare professionals.

To read the Patient Summary of the 2021 VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease scan the QR code or visit <https://www.healthquality.va.gov/guidelines/cd/copd>



Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease



VA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) 2021

What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)?

The word “pulmonary” means dealing with the lungs. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a combination of conditions that affect your lungs, block airflow and causes trouble breathing. These can include medical conditions such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, and other symptoms.



COPD can be prevented and treated



What Causes COPD?

People get COPD for different reasons. The number one cause is tobacco use, especially cigarette smoking. Also being exposed for a long

time to substances that irritate the lungs as part of their work or home environment. The irritating substances could be gases, chemicals, or particles in the air. Exposure can cause damage to parts of the lungs and they may not function as they should.

How is COPD Diagnosed?

Your provider (which may be a doctor, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or other health care provider) can help you determine whether or not you have COPD. If your provider suspects you may have COPD, they can arrange testing which may include a Pulmonary Function Test or a Broncho-provocation Test to determine whether you do or do not have COPD.

What are the Goals of COPD Treatment?

The overall goal of treating your COPD is to control the symptoms and optimize your health for better quality of life and mental health. Well-treated COPD will allow you to be more physically active and may improve your sleep.

GOALS

- Prevent COPD from progressing
- Improve breathing
- Increase exercise tolerance
- Improve your quality of life
- Treat symptoms
- Prevent complications

What are the Treatment Options for COPD?

There are multiple treatment options for COPD that can help you reach your goals. By talking with a provider, you can learn more about the available treatment options and how they can help you.

Work with your provider to identify treatments that improve your symptoms and your health. Your provider may prescribe Pulmonary Rehabilitation that may include other providers such as a Physical Therapist, Respiratory Therapist, Occupational Therapist, or a Dietician.

At Home and Daily

The following treatment options are things that your provider may ask you to do at home or to make a part of your normal routine:

- Medication
- Oxygen Therapy
- Supported self-management
- Pulmonary (Lung) Rehabilitation
- Breathing exercises
- Nutrition referral
- Surgery

Do not be afraid to ask questions or ask for help

Medication

Your provider may prescribe medication that you breathe in so it goes straight to your lungs. The medication can help you keep your symptoms from getting worse or help manage your COPD.



Work with your provider to make sure you are taking the inhaled medication correctly and as directed. There are many different types of inhaled medications. These medications work in different ways and affect different parts of the lungs to help improve your breathing.

Inhaled Medicine Devices

Some breathing medications are delivered with a device called a metered-dose inhaler, Diskus, Twisthaler, or Respimat. Your provider can show you how to use the devices and give you handouts with instructions.

What Should You Do If Your COPD Worsens?

If you are experiencing a sudden worsening in your ability to breathe such as an increase in coughing or a change in the color of your mucus, you should seek help immediately from a clinic or emergency department.

