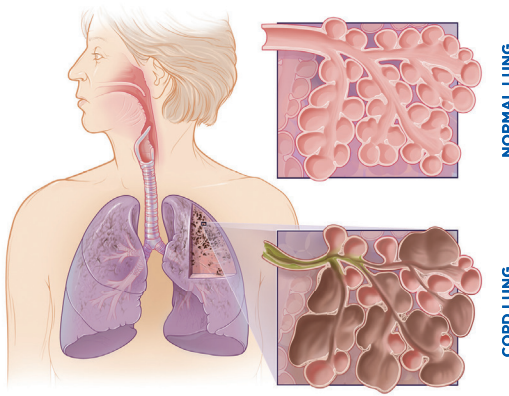


# LIVING BETTER WITH COPD



By getting ahead of your symptoms and talking about them with your healthcare provider regularly, you can put yourself on the path to a better quality of life.

## WHAT IS COPD?



Healthy lungs expand to fill with air and then bounce back to their original shape when air is exhaled, retaining lung structure and moving air quickly in and out. **With COPD**, the air sacs no longer bounce back to their original shape, and the airways can become swollen or thicker than normal. Increased mucus production and partially blocked airways make it even harder to get air in and out.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO:



### QUIT smoking

If you smoke, quitting is the best thing you can do to prevent more damage to your lungs. Ask your provider about new options for quitting. Many resources to help are available online. Visit [smokefree.gov](http://smokefree.gov); [lung.org](http://lung.org); or call 1-800-QUIT NOW for more information.



### AVOID pollutants

Try to stay away from things that could irritate your lungs, like dust and strong fumes. Stay indoors when the outside air quality is poor, and avoid places where there might be cigarette smoke.



### VISIT your provider

COPD is treatable. Talk to your healthcare provider regularly; follow treatment by taking your medications; and get your flu, pneumococcal, and COVID-19 vaccines as recommended.



### GET support

Caregivers, friends, and family provide an important support network that can help you stay on track with your treatment and identify symptoms. Listen to them, talk with them. They can mean the difference in a successful treatment.

Visit [COPD.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://COPD.nhlbi.nih.gov) for more helpful tips.



# NOTICE ANY OF THESE SYMPTOMS? TALK TO A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER.



- Constant coughing, sometimes called “smoker’s cough”
- Shortness of breath while doing everyday activities
- Excess sputum production
- Feeling unable to breathe or take a deep breath & wheezing

If you see these symptoms in yourself or a loved one, make an appointment. Acting early is essential to getting control of the disease so you can live better with it.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR VISIT:

### BE INFORMED

It’s not always easy to get all the information you need in the brief time of a typical office visit. Learn about COPD before your visit so you can be prepared.

### LOG SYMPTOMS

Consider keeping a log of your symptoms for the days or weeks before your appointment and bring it with you. Log details of what you were doing when you experienced any of these COPD symptoms and how long they lasted.

### KNOW RISK FACTORS

- History of smoking
- Long-term exposure to pollution, certain chemicals and dusts
- Some genetic conditions, such as alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency

Share all the risk factors you may have to help your provider give you the best care.

### KEEP NOTES

Write down any questions you have before the visit so you can remember to ask them. Take notes during the visit, and don’t be afraid to ask the provider to repeat something if you don’t understand it.

### DON'T GO ALONE

If possible, bring a family member or friend with you. Two sets of ears are always better than one when hearing information about your health.



### COPD resources at your fingertips:

Learn More Breathe Better®  
website:  
[COPD.nhlbi.nih.gov](https://www.copd.nhlbi.nih.gov)

COPD Foundation website:  
[www.copdfoundation.org](https://www.copdfoundation.org)

COPD Foundation  
toll-free information line  
for one-on-one support:  
1-866-316-COPD (2673)

American Lung Association  
website: [www.lung.org](https://www.lung.org)



NIH Publication No. 22-HL-8080  
March 2022

**LEARN MORE  
BREATHE BETTER®**

Learn More Breathe Better® is a  
registered trademark of HHS.