



## **COPD Basics**

Steps to Take When Living With COPD





This educational program was distributed with funding from Sanofi and Regeneron.

This book will help you know what to do if you or someone you know has been told they have COPD.

## Section One Objectives

In this section you will learn about:

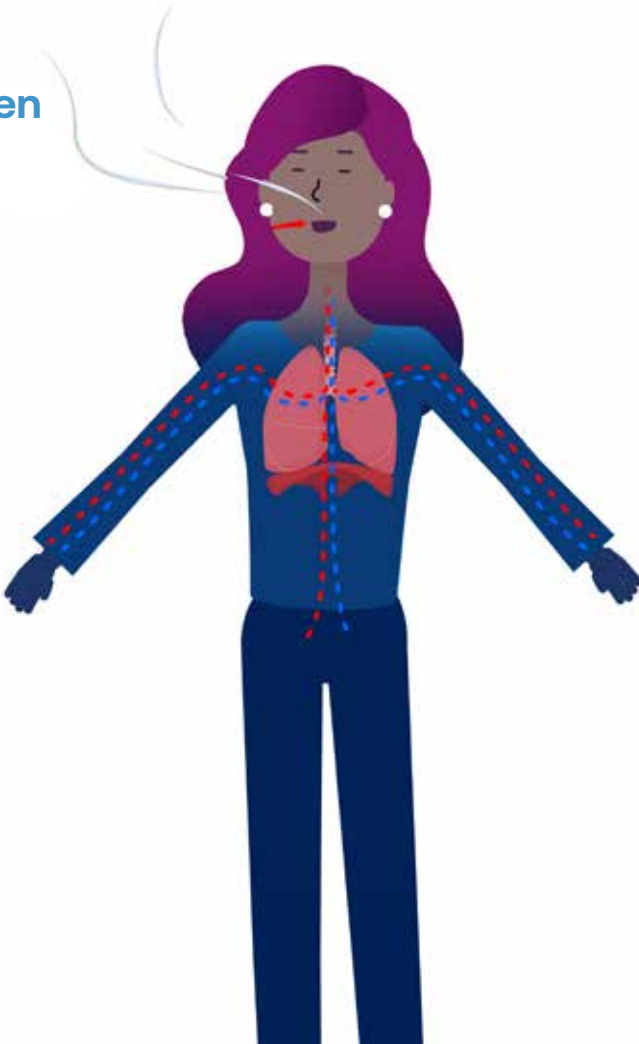
- How the lungs work
- What happens to your lungs when you have COPD
- What is COPD



## How Our Lungs Work

Oxygen is in the air you breathe. Your lungs make sure your body has the oxygen you need to keep living. Every organ in your body needs oxygen and the lungs breathe air in and out of your body.

Oxygen



## What is COPD?

COPD stands for:

**C**hronic (long term)

**O**bstructive (partly blocked)

**P**ulmonary (lungs)

**D**isease (illness)

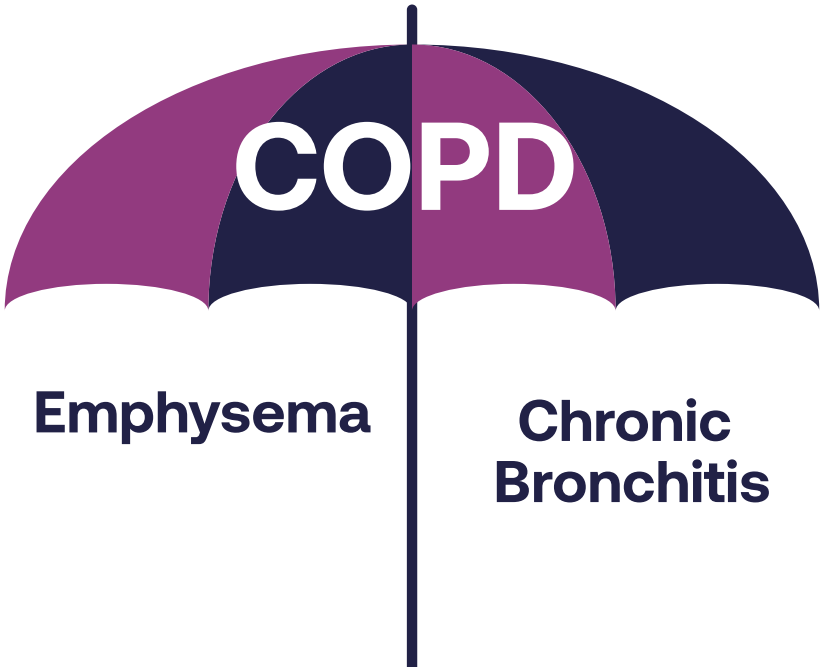
## What happens in your lungs when you have COPD?

COPD is a chronic lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. When you have COPD, you have damage to your lungs. There is no cure but you can get treatment so you can live your life and continue to enjoy the things you like to do.



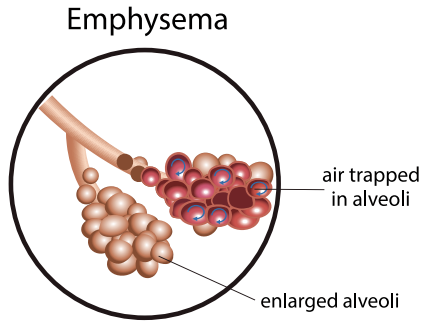
## Emphysema or Chronic Bronchitis?

Your doctor may have told you that you have one of these diseases. Both of these are also called COPD.



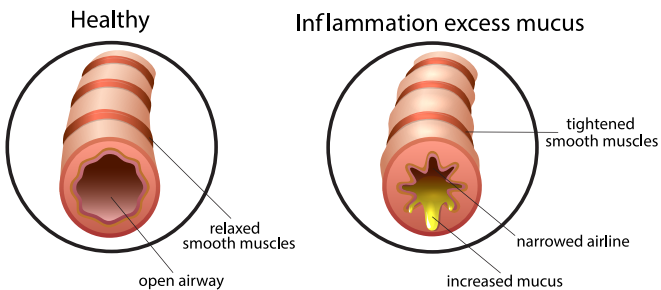
# Emphysema

If you have emphysema the air sacs in your lungs are damaged. The air gets trapped in your lungs and makes breathing hard. You get less oxygen to your blood.



# Chronic Bronchitis

If you have chronic bronchitis the airways in your lungs are swollen. This causes sticky mucus in your airways and makes breathing hard.



## Why do I have COPD?

There are many risk factors for getting COPD. They include:

- Smoke
- Job exposure (exposing you to dust or fumes)
- Air pollution
- A genetic condition (called alpha-1 deficiency)
- Childhood respiratory infections

## Fill this section of your book out now:

My doctor told me I have:

- COPD
- Chronic Bronchitis
- Emphysema
- Other



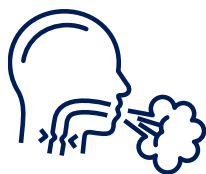
## Section Two Objectives

In this section you will learn about:

- Signs and symptoms of COPD
- How COPD is diagnosed

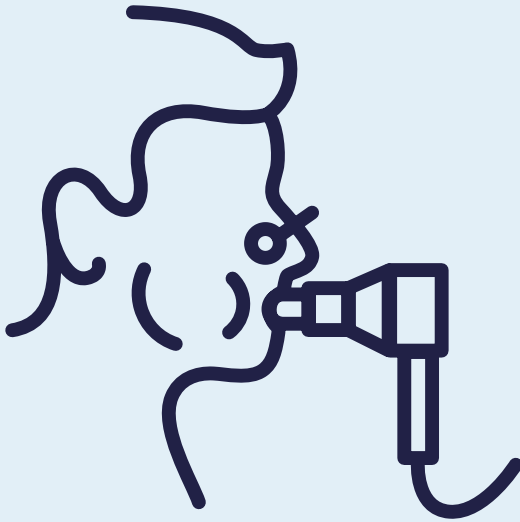
### What are the signs and symptoms of COPD?

A symptom is how you feel when you feel unwell. If you have COPD you might have a cough that will not go away, shortness of breath and you might be more tired. You could also have more frequent lung infections and wheezing (sounds like a whistle) when you breathe. There are several things that can make your symptoms worse. Some of these triggers are cold or hot weather, air pollution and smoke.



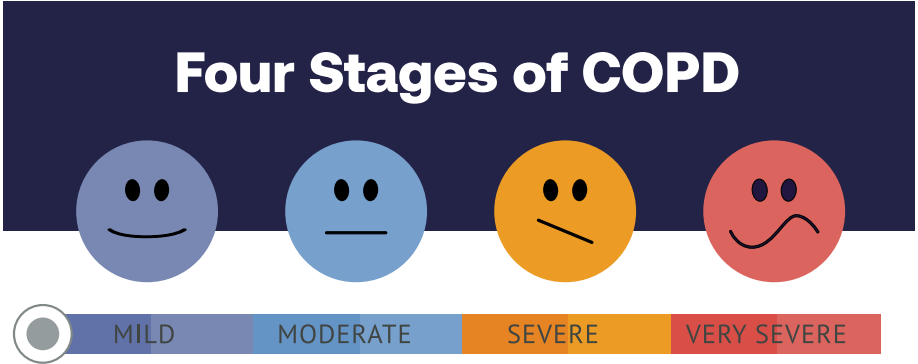
## How do you know if you have COPD?

Your doctor should have you do a test called spirometry to make sure you have COPD. It is a simple breathing test that measures the speed and amount of air you can blow out of your lungs.



# Stages of COPD

There are four stages of COPD.



Your doctor will likely tell you what stage of COPD you have. Knowing what stage you have will help your doctor know the best way to treat your disease.

## Fill in this section of your workbook now:

My day-to-day COPD symptoms are:

- Cough     Mucus (include color) \_\_\_\_\_
- Short of breath at rest
- Short of breath with activity
- Wheezing/whistling sound when I breathe
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

I have had a spirometry breathing test:

- Yes     No

## Section Three Objectives

In this section you will learn about:

- Types of medications to treat COPD
- Other ways to manage your COPD

## Treating Your COPD

Each person's COPD symptoms and treatment are different. You should work with your doctor to find a treatment plan that works for you. This will help you control your symptoms and know what to do if your symptoms get worse.

## COPD Medication

Your doctor will decide what medication is right for you. It will be based on your COPD stage, your history, what your symptoms are and your risk of having a flare up, also called an exacerbation.



## Types of Medications

- 1. Bronchodilators** help keep airways open, some are short acting and help you right away, others are long acting and last for 12 hours or more.
- 2. Anti-inflammatories** help to decrease the swelling and mucus production.
- 3. Antibiotics** are sometimes given to take with flare-ups.
- 4. Biologics** are used to treat symptoms by targeting the inflammation present in some people living with COPD.
- 5. Supplemental Oxygen** is another type of medication. You may be prescribed this if you are not getting enough oxygen.

You need to take your medicine the right way so that it can help you. Make sure your doctor, nurse or pharmacist has helped you learn how to take your medication the right way and at the right time.

## Fill in this section of your workbook now:

My medications are controlling my symptoms well:  Yes  No

I was shown how to use my inhaler or other medication delivery device within the past 2 years:  Yes  No

If I answered no to either of these, I need to talk to my doctor.

## Taking Care of Yourself

It is important for you to take care of your health so that you can live your best life. Here are some ways you can do this.

### Quit Smoking

If you smoke, quitting smoking is an important part of your treatment plan. It is never too late and you do not have to quit alone. Talk to your doctor or get help by calling 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872).



## Control Your Breathing

Pursed lip breathing can help if you feel short of breath. Practice pursed lip breathing:



1. Sit in a chair and relax your neck and shoulder muscles.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose with your mouth closed, for a count of one, two.
3. Purse your lips like you are going to blow out a candle and breathe out slowly; try to breathe out longer than you breathed in, so one, two, three, four.

## Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a program that includes education and exercise. It helps people with lung disease build strength and have a more active life. Talk to your doctor to find out if pulmonary rehab is right for you. If you had pulmonary rehab in the past, you may benefit from it again.

## Stay Active

Staying active helps you feel better. It gets oxygen to your body and it strengthens the muscles that help you breathe. The right amount of activity can help you have more energy and feel happier. Talk to your doctor about what activity is right for you.

## COPD Action Plan

Have a written COPD management plan that you fill out with your doctor. The Action Plan will help you know:

1. How and when to take medications.
2. How to know if your symptoms are getting worse.
3. When to call your doctor.
4. When you need to get help right away.

You can fill out the Action Plan at the end of this booklet.



## Find Support

Living with COPD can affect your emotional health. You might feel sad, fear, or worry. Talk to your doctor and let them know how you feel. Support groups are available for you to meet with other people who understand what it is like to live with COPD.

- Call the Lung Association HelpLine to get help finding a support group. Lung HelpLine: 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872 and press 2).
- Call a Lung Health Navigator for FREE support to learn better ways to manage your COPD. They will meet with you on the phone or online to help you get a good plan in place. Lung Health Navigators: 1-866-252-2959.
- Look for a Better Breathers Club support group on [Lung.org/better-breathers](https://Lung.org/better-breathers).
- Join the Patient & Caregiver Network to get more information about managing your disease and connect with other patients and caregivers. Find out more at [Lung.org/pcn](https://Lung.org/pcn).

## Stay Healthy

Take these steps to stay as healthy as you can.

- Get vaccinations that your doctor recommends for you.
- The food you eat can help you breathe easier. Talk to a dietitian or nutritionist to learn what foods are good for you.
- Avoid indoor and outdoor air pollution. This can include tobacco smoke, mold, dust and exhaust fumes. These can trigger a COPD flare-up, also called an exacerbation.



## Follow the 5 P's

Following these tips can help you have the energy you need to get the most out of your day.

- 1.** Pace yourself – rest between your daily activities.
- 2.** Plan ahead – space out activities that require a lot of energy.
- 3.** Position yourself – sit when you can to get activities done.
- 4.** Prioritize activities – do activities that are most important or need to be done when you have the most energy.
- 5.** Pursed lip breathing – use pursed lip breathing to control your breathing during activities.

## Fill in this section of your workbook now:

I am doing these things to help take care of my health:

- Quitting smoking
- Using pursed lip breathing
- Staying active
- Following an action plan
- Finding support
- Getting recommended vaccinations
- Eating healthy foods
- Avoiding indoor and outdoor air pollution
- Attending a pulmonary rehabilitation program



## If you are looking for more information about your COPD, start here:

1. The Lung HelpLine:  
call 1-800-586-4872 or visit [Lung.org/helpline](https://Lung.org/helpline)
2. COPD information: [Lung.org/copd](https://Lung.org/copd)
  - Videos on how to use an inhaler, nebulizer and more.
  - Videos to help use supplemental oxygen correctly.
  - Videos to show how to do pursed lip breathing and belly breathing.
  - More information about staying active and eating well.





# What Data Does the American Lung Association Need Collected?

The American Lung Association requests that providers and patients complete a survey to provide feedback on their COPD resources. Your feedback will help improve the resources.

**COPD Basics Booklet:** Steps to Take When Living with COPD

**My COPD Plan**



<https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7805062/COPD-for-Life-Resource-Feedback-Survey>




## Contact the American Lung Association

For COPD for Life related questions contact Jennifer Schroeder at [Jennifer.Schroeder@lung.org](mailto:Jennifer.Schroeder@lung.org)



This protocol was developed by the Research & Evaluation Group (R&E Group) at Public Health Management Corporation, an evaluation partner of the American Lung Association. The purpose of this protocol is to link to evaluation tools that will be used to collect data about COPD for Life. This protocol does not address any additional required reporting into the Lung Association's data systems, ROI, Convio, or Moodle. **Remember, if the data are not reported, it is as though the activities never happened.**

# My COPD Plan

This plan will help you know what to do on good days or sick days. Fill it out with your doctor or nurse.

My Zone	How I Feel	What I Should Do
<p>Green Zone</p> 	<p>I have no new COPD symptoms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I feel good.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am eating well and able to move around the way I usually do.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I will continue taking my prescribed medications.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I will use oxygen as prescribed (check this box if you usually use oxygen).</p>
<p>Yellow Zone</p> 	<p>I have more COPD symptoms than usual.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a new cough.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have a change in color of my mucus or more mucus.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am more tired.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I will continue taking my prescribed medications.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I will continue to use my oxygen as prescribed (check this box if you use oxygen)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I need to take these extra medications my doctor prescribed _____ _____ _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I should rest and use pursed lip breathing if I need to.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I will call my doctor today to report these symptoms.</p>
<p>Red Zone</p> 	<p>I am having very bad COPD symptoms.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I am short of breath, even when I rest.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I have blue around my lips or fingers.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I feel very sick.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> I should call 911 or seek medical help right away.</p>

## Important Phone Numbers

How I feel	Who should I call	Phone number
I am in the Red Zone 	Emergency	911
I am in the Yellow Zone 		

## My Medications for COPD

Name of Medicine	What it Does	When to Take	How much to Take

**This is what my oxygen should be set at.** [Skip this section if you are not using supplemental oxygen.](#)

Resting: \_\_\_\_\_ Increased Activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Sleeping: \_\_\_\_\_

### At least once a year I should do these things:

- See my lung doctor.
- Talk to my lung doctor about the medications I am taking.
- Tell my lung doctor what my COPD symptoms are usually like.
- Tell my lung doctor what things I am doing to manage my COPD.
- Go over my COPD Plan with my lung doctor to make sure it is still right for me.



**When you can't breathe,  
nothing else matters.®**

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