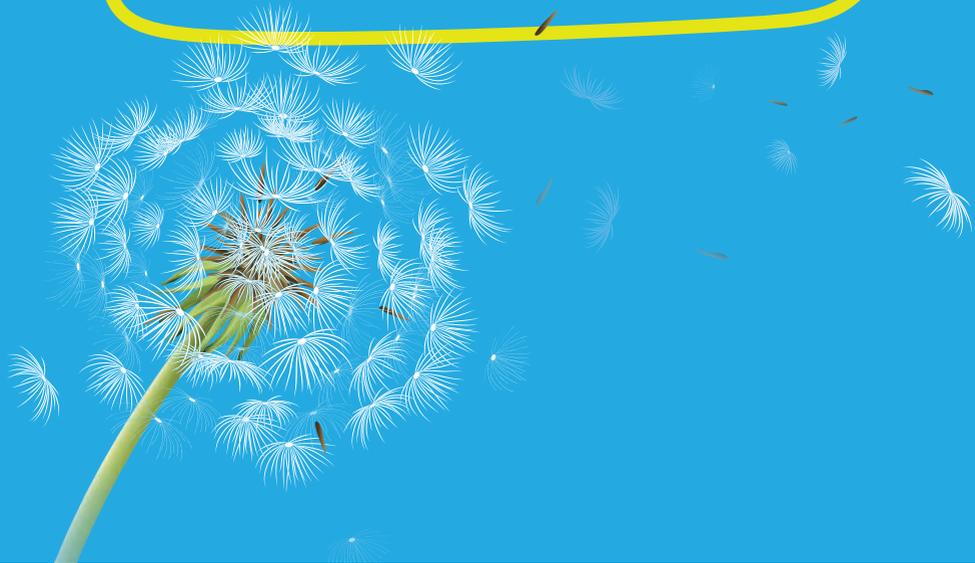


SAVE YOUR BREATH!



COPD

Support Ireland

www.copd.ie

What is COPD?

Chronic means won't go away
Obstructive means partly blocked
Pulmonary means in the lungs
Disease means sickness

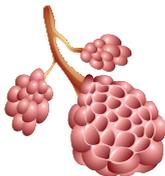
COPD is a collective name for two main lung conditions (emphysema and chronic bronchitis) that make it hard for sufferers to breathe due to obstruction in the air passages of their lungs.

What happens to people with COPD?

There are 2 major conditions for people with COPD:

Emphysema

Emphysema takes place in the alveoli, which are the air sacs inside your lungs and are clustered like grapes. The alveoli are damaged and sometimes burst, which lowers the amount of oxygen that reaches your blood. Air becomes trapped in the lungs, which over-inflates the lungs like a balloon.



Chronic Bronchitis

Chronic bronchitis takes place in the bronchi, which are the air tunnels inside your lungs. The bronchi are damaged, which leads to scars and too much mucus being produced. Both the scars and mucus clog up the airways, decreasing oxygen getting into the blood and increasing the chance of infections.



Am I at risk for COPD?

If you answer yes to four or more of the following questions you should ask your Pharmacist about COPD.

1. Do you cough several times every day, most days of the week?
2. Have you been coughing like this for more than 3 months?
3. Do you cough up mucus (phlegm) most days?
4. Do you get breathless from physical activity or moderate exercise?
5. Are you a smoker or former smoker? Smokers are at biggest risk of COPD
6. Do you live in or work at places with a lot of pollution, fumes, dust, or smoke?
7. Is there a family history of lung conditions?
8. Are you over the age of 35?

How can I tell if I have COPD?

COPD is progressive meaning it has several stages of severity. It tends to creep up on people slowly. This means that it can often be several years before symptoms reach a level that the person will seek a diagnosis for a problem or that the doctor will think of COPD.

Some symptoms of COPD:

1. It's hard to breathe or you feel out of breath
2. Wheezing
3. Coughing often, usually with mucus
4. Extreme tiredness (fatigue)
5. More regular chest infections that can last for several weeks

Diagnosis of COPD

1. If you think you may have COPD, visit your GP. Your doctor will ask you about your smoking history and environmental or occupational exposure. Diagnosis of COPD is by a spirometry test which may be carried out by your GP or at a hospital.
2. Spirometry measures your lung function. You breathe into the spirometer, and the result is recorded to see if you have an airflow obstruction.



Is there a cure for COPD?

No, there is no cure yet for COPD.

However, there are treatments to make living with the symptoms of COPD easier and to slow down the progress of the disease. The earlier the diagnosis the more effective the treatments.

Some treatments for COPD include:

- **Smoking Cessation:** Your healthcare professional can support you to quit smoking.
- **Inhalers:** There are various types and devices available. Depending on the medication inside the inhaler, these will help make breathing easier by opening up the airways and treating flare-ups.
- **Exercise:** One of the most important treatments is exercise. Ask your healthcare professional about pulmonary rehabilitation and an exercise programme.
- **Corticosteroids:** These can be given to soothe the inflammation in your lungs and help you breathe easier.
- **Antibiotics:** COPD may make you more vulnerable to infection. Bacteria causing the infection can cause exacerbations. Antibiotics will help to eliminate the bacteria.
- **Flu Vaccine:** COPD can make you more vulnerable to infections like the flu and pneumonia. Seasonal vaccinations help prevent infections.

Lifestyle Changes

Exercise

- Physiotherapy: pulmonary rehabilitation programmes and exercise are important for helping you feel less breathless. Regular exercise can improve your lungs' condition and help with the mental stress of living with a chronic disease. The key is doing exercise gradually and with common sense.

Nutrition

- Healthy eating is an important part of managing COPD. The more you weigh, the more work your lungs have to do. Being too thin is also a problem, as you need more energy to breathe than healthy people. Healthy eating will give you the right type of energy to work throughout your day.



Smoking

- Smoking is a huge factor in causing COPD, even though not everyone who has COPD is a smoker.

Environment

- Air pollution is another big factor in causing COPD, especially in workplaces and the environment.

Health and Wellbeing

- Talking with family and friends or other people with COPD can help relieve stress and manage depression.
- Join a local COPD support group and learn how to manage your COPD.
- Complementary therapies can help with managing your condition.



SUPPORTED BY:



Learn more about COPD at:

www.saveyourbreath.ie

REMEMBER THE ABCs of COPD

- A. Avoid the risks
- B. Be aware the symptoms
- C. Consult your Pharmacist

**Text 50300 to Donate €2 to
COPD Support Ireland**

**COPD ADVICELINE
FREEPHONE 1800 832146**