

TREATMENT

Medications like bronchodilator and steroid inhalers can help reduce the symptoms of COPD but the only intervention that is known to slow the progression of COPD is to stop smoking.

SMOKING CESSATION

Are you ready to stop smoking?

Did you know that Health First Colorado provides counseling and pays for FDA-approved medications to help you stop smoking?

How to get started:

- Talk to your doctor about quitting
- Make a plan that may involve prescription medications
- Start counseling, join a support group, or call the Colorado Quit Line



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R.I.C.H. ONLINE COOKBOOK

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

A Pocket Guide to Better Health



COPD



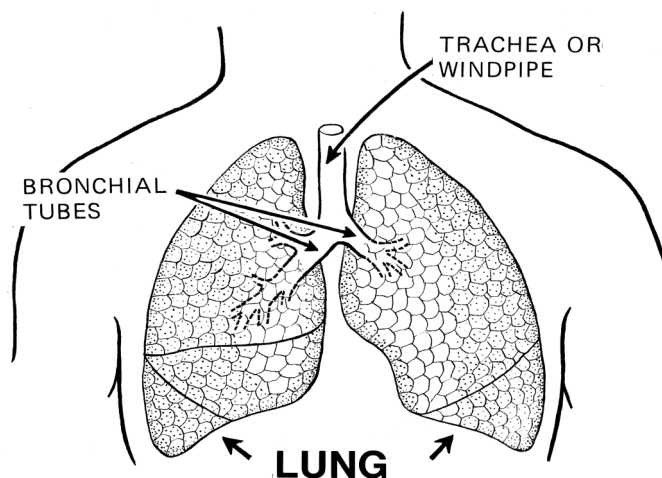
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WHAT IS COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a chronic disease that involves obstruction in the lungs, making it hard to breathe, and is progressive, meaning it gets worse over time. The majority of COPD (over 75%) is caused by smoking and most of the remaining cases are caused long-term exposure to other lung irritants like chemicals, pollution, or dust.

When we breathe, air passes through a tube called the trachea into the lungs where the airways continue to divide into smaller and smaller tubes until they reach air sacs called alveoli. In the alveoli, oxygen passes into our blood and travels throughout the body. In COPD, long-term exposure to smoke or other irritants makes the airways smaller and destroys the air sacs. This makes it very hard for air to move through the lungs so less oxygen gets into the blood.

COPD can make you feel out of breath which makes it hard to do daily tasks and even increases your risk of heart disease. Unfortunately, the effects of COPD are largely irreversible so it is important to work with your doctor and make a plan so your COPD doesn't get worse.



RISK FACTORS FOR COPD

About 75% of all COPD is caused by smoking. Other causes include long-term exposure to other lung irritants like chemicals or pollution and rare genetic diseases. The more you smoke and the longer you smoke increases your risk for COPD.

The most common symptom of COPD is a chronic cough (also known as a smoker's cough) with a lot of mucus. Over time, you might also develop difficulty breathing (especially with physical activity), wheezing, or chest tightness. People with COPD also have a greater risk of lung infections like the flu.

It is important to see your doctor before your symptoms become severe because COPD is mostly irreversible.

DIAGNOSIS

Spirometry: measuring how much air is in your lungs (FVC) and how fast you can empty your lungs (FEV1). This test can help determine if your airways are affected by COPD. Your doctor might repeat the test after trying an albuterol inhaler to make sure your symptoms are not due to asthma.



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