

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease - COPD

What is COPD?

- COPD is a name for a group of lung conditions that make breathing difficult, such as emphysema (damaged to the air sacs of lungs) and chronic bronchitis (long-term inflammation of the airways)
- Commonly affects those who are middle aged or older adults who smoke

What causes COPD?

- The lungs become inflamed, damaged and narrow
- Main cause is smoking
- COPD can also be caused by long-term exposure to toxic fumes or dust

What are the signs & symptoms of COPD?

- Increasing breathlessness, in particular when active
- A persistent chesty cough with phlegm
- Frequent chest infections
- Persistent wheezing

How is COPD diagnosed?

Your GP will ask you more about your symptoms and do a breathing test.

Treating COPD

The damage that COPD does to the lungs is permanent, but treatment can help slow down the progression of the condition:

- Stopping smoking - is the most important thing to do
- Inhalers and medicines - can help ease breathing
- Pulmonary rehabilitation - is a specialised programme of exercise and education
- Surgery or lung transplant - is available to only small number of people

Help available

- Download the free NHS Quit Smoking app <https://www.nhs.uk/better-health/quit-smoking/>
- Speak to your GP about stop smoking treatments available

References

- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-copd/>