

What is COPD?

COPD or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease is a serious lung disease that, over time, makes it hard to breathe. You may have heard COPD called other names, like emphysema or chronic bronchitis.



Breathe New Hampshire has served the people of New Hampshire since 1916. Through education, advocacy, research, and partnerships, we are working to eliminate lung disease and improve the quality of life for those living with lung disease in New Hampshire.

We invite you to join us as a volunteer, partner, or donor, so that we can continue to strengthen our efforts.



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Any person with COPD should seek medical advice.*
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COPD



GET THE FACTS



What are the signs and symptoms of COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)?

- Constant coughing, sometimes called “smoker’s cough”
- Shortness of breath while doing everyday activities
- Excess sputum or phlegm production
- Feeling like you can’t breathe
- Being unable to take a deep breath
- Wheezing



Who is at risk for COPD?

Some of the things that put you at risk for developing COPD include:

- Smoking or having a history of smoking
- Long-term exposure to things that can irritate your lungs (secondhand smoke, certain chemicals, dusts, or fumes)
- Genetic factors (a condition known as alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) deficiency)

How do you get tested for COPD?

Everyone at risk for COPD who has a cough, sputum production, or shortness of breath should be tested for the disease. The breathing test used to diagnosis COPD is *spirometry*. The simple test measures the amount of air you can blow out of your lungs and how fast you can blow it out.

Are there treatments for COPD?

Yes. COPD is different for every person and your doctor will decide the best treatment for you. Quitting smoking is the most helpful and cost-effective way to prevent and slow the progression of COPD. Here are a few things you can do to minimize risk. We encourage you to seek medical help to determine what is the best course of action based on your current health and symptoms.

- Staying away from all tobacco smoke
- Avoiding things that can bother your lungs, such as dust, fumes, chemicals, or smog
- Staying active and/or joining a pulmonary rehabilitation program
- Getting yearly flu shots
- Joining a support group

Under the care of a health care professional

- Using oxygen therapy
- Taking medications to help treat symptoms like coughing and wheezing



Is there a cure for COPD?

COPD cannot be cured, but you can take steps to make breathing easier and live a longer and more active life.

For more information, visit our website at BreatheNH.org or call 603.669.2411