

Treating COPD



Your [healthcare provider](#) will prescribe the best treatments for your COPD.

Treatment

Treatments include:

- Medicines. Some medicines help ease [symptoms](#). Others control lung [inflammation](#). Always take your medicines as prescribed. Learn the names of your medicines, and how and when to use them. Talk with your provider about other conditions you have and the medicines you take. When using a metered dose inhaler or nebulizer, use the correct techniques. If you have any questions about how to use your medicine delivery system, call your provider or refer to the user manual.
- Tests. To monitor risks, your provider may advise a blood or sputum tests, or other lung function tests. All people with COPD should be screened once for alpha-1 antitrypsin [deficiency](#) (AATD).
- Oxygen therapy. If your blood contains too little oxygen, you may need oxygen therapy. Ask about long-term oxygen therapy with your provider.
- Smoking. If you smoke, quit. Smoking is the main cause of COPD. Quitting will help you be able to better manage your COPD. Also don't use e-cigarettes or vaping products. Ask your provider to help you quit.
- Preventing infections. Infections such as a cold or the flu can worsen your symptoms. Try to stay away from sick people. Wash your hands often. And ask your provider about vaccines for the flu and pneumonia.
- Surgery. In a few cases, surgery may be needed.

Coping with shortness of breath

Coping tips include:

- Exercise. Be as active as you can. This will help your energy and strengthen your muscles so you can do more.
- Breathing methods. Ask your provider or nurse to show you how to do pursed-lip breathing.
- Pollution. Stay away from both indoor and outdoor pollution. Indoor pollution includes things like burning wood, smoke from home cooking, and heating fuels. Outdoor pollution includes things like dusts, vapors, fumes, gases, and other chemicals.
- Balance rest and activity. Balance rest with activity. For example, you might start the day with getting dressed and eating breakfast. Then you can relax and read the paper. After that, take a brief walk. And then sit with your feet up for a while.
- Pulmonary rehab. Community and home-based programs work as well as hospital-based programs as long as they are done as often and as intensely. These programs help with shortness of breath in people with COPD. Supervised, traditional pulmonary rehab is the best option for people with COPD. These programs help manage your disease, breathing methods, exercise, support, and counseling. To find one, ask your provider or call your local hospital. Also talk with your provider about which program is best for you.
- Healthy eating. Eating a healthy, balanced [diet](#) is key to staying as healthy as possible. So is staying at your ideal weight. Being over- or underweight can affect your health. Make sure you have a lot of fruits and vegetables every day. And also eat whole grains, lean meats and fish, and low-fat dairy products.

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