



Lung Care  
at Penn Highlands Healthcare

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[www.phhealthcare.org/lung](http://www.phhealthcare.org/lung)

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# Living with COPD

## Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

*Penn Highlands Healthcare*



# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

## WHAT IS COPD?

COPD is a progressive disease that makes it hard to breathe. It can cause coughing that produces large amounts of mucus, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and other symptoms.

COPD causes less air flow in and out of the lungs because one or more of the following:

- The airways and air sacs lose their elastic quality.
- The walls between many of the air sacs are destroyed.
- The walls of the airways become thick and inflamed.
- The airways make more mucus than usual, which can clog them.

## HOW DOES COPD DEVELOP?

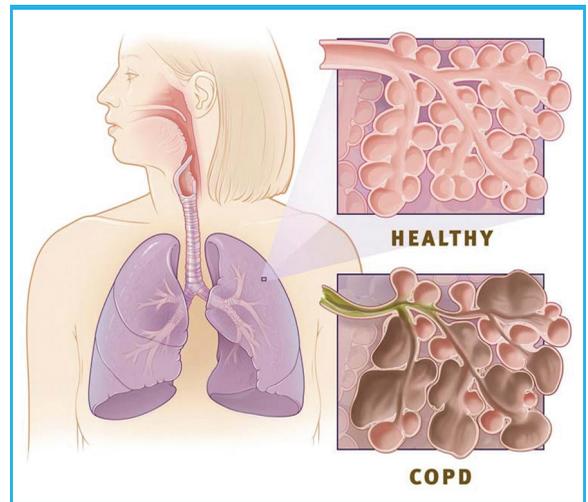
COPD develops slowly. Symptoms often worsen over time and can limit your ability to do routine activities. Severe COPD may prevent you from doing even basic activities like walking, cooking, or caring for yourself.

## HOW IS COPD TREATED?

COPD has no cure yet, however, lifestyle changes and treatments can help you feel better, stay more active and slow the progress of the disease.

## THE GOALS OF COPD TREATMENT INCLUDE:

- Relieving your symptoms
- Slowing the progress of the disease
- Improving your exercise tolerance
- Preventing and treating complications
- Improving your overall health



National Institutes of Health

## LIFESTYLE CHANGES

- Quit smoking - it is the most important step you can take to treat COPD
- Avoid lung irritants
- Pneumonia Vaccines - those with COPD are at a higher risk for pneumonia
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Oxygen Therapy

## WHY QUIT SMOKING?

People who smoke have the greatest risk of lung cancer. The risk of lung cancer increases with the length of time and number of cigarettes you've smoked. If you quit smoking, even after smoking for many years, you can significantly reduce your chances of developing lung cancer.

For smokers and former smokers who are age 55 to 74 and who have smoked for 30 years or more and either continue to smoke or have quit within the past 15 years, we suggest being screened annually for lung cancer.