



Managing your COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a chronic lung disease that, over time, makes it hard to breathe. You may also have heard COPD called by other names, such as emphysema or chronic bronchitis.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAY HEALTHY?

Visit your primary doctor or lung specialist at least two times a year, even if you feel fine. Be ready to discuss:

- **Symptoms**

Talk about how often you have them and what triggers your symptoms. Make sure you know the early warning signs of a lung infection and what to do if you have one.

- **Medications**

Understand what your medicines are, how often you should take them, how to use them properly and what results to expect.

- **Lung Function**

Ask your doctor about a spirometry test. It is a breathing test that measures the function of your lungs. Anyone diagnosed with COPD should have a spirometry test.

HOW TO PREVENT AND MANAGE BREATHING PROBLEMS

- Stop smoking.
- Avoid breathing in harmful things that can damage your lungs such as chemical fumes, dust, air pollution and secondhand smoke.
- Take your medicines the way your doctor tells you to.
- Get your flu vaccine each year.¹
- Talk with your doctor about the pneumonia vaccine.²
- Take steps to avoid infections such as staying away from people who have active respiratory infections.
- Learn about ways to strengthen the muscles you use to breathe.
- Maintain a healthy diet and healthy eating habits.
- Know when to get emergency help, especially if your medicine is no longer helping you breathe.

Independent Health Resources

COPD ACTION PLAN

This plan is a guide to help you monitor your COPD every day and should be completed with the help of your physician. It outlines your medications, prevention strategies and what to do if your condition changes. For a free copy of a COPD Action Plan, talk with a health coach.

HEALTH COACHES are registered health professionals such as nurses, dietitians and respiratory therapists who follow national disease management guidelines to educate members about their disease, appropriate lifestyle modifications and self-monitoring skills.

If you would like to know more about managing your COPD, please call 1-800-501-3439, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. and ask to speak with a health coach.

24-HOUR MEDICAL HELP LINE*

If you have a health concern and can't reach your doctor, you can call our Medical Help Line – 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The 24-Hour Medical Help Line provides a staff of professional registered nurses who are available to answer your call and respond to your questions based upon symptoms. Call **1-800-501-3439** at any time.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT COPD, visit the American Lung Association's website at lung.org/lung-disease.

VISIT HEALTHWISE ONLINE

Healthwise is an online health management resource that provides you with interactive tools and information on hundreds of health topics, symptoms, prescriptions, drug interactions and more, so you can take charge of your personal health and lifestyle goals. To learn more about your COPD, visit independenthealth.com/healthwise.

NEW YORK STATE SMOKERS' QUITLINE

Independent Health knows that quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health, but we also realize that it is one of the most difficult habits to break. The best place to start is the New York State Smokers' Quitline. The toll-free number is 1-866-697-8487 or 1-866-NYQUITS, or visit the website at nysmokefree.com.

TOOLS & RESOURCES

From health tips and guidelines that help you stay informed, to useful online and mobile tools that help make it easier to manage your health, Independent Health has the tools and resources you need to lead a healthier life.

To learn more, visit the "Healthy Living Tips & Guidelines" section by logging on to MyIH.com.

¹ [vaccines.gov/diseases/flu](https://www.vaccines.gov/diseases/flu).

² [vaccines.gov/diseases/pneumonia](https://www.vaccines.gov/diseases/pneumonia).

* IndependentHealth's 24-hour Medical Help Line should not be used for diagnosis or as a substitute for a physician.