

NOVEMBER IS COPD AWARENESS MONTH

COPD Affects an Estimated 30 Million People in the U.S.

COPD Includes Emphysema, Chronic Bronchitis and Refractory Asthma

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a chronic inflammatory lung disease that causes obstructed airflow from the lungs. There are different types of COPD and each type can affect how well different methods of treatment will work.

Please use this guide as a resource for knowledge and understanding of the types of COPD, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment.

01 | Types of COPD

COPD is an umbrella term that includes the following three lung diseases:

- **Emphysema** – with emphysema, the alveoli are damaged. The stretching of the damaged air sacs causes the lungs increase in size, making it more difficult to move air in and out. Old air gets trapped, leaving no room for new air to get in.
- **Chronic Bronchitis** – chronic bronchitis includes inflammation of the bronchial tubes and airways, resulting in difficulty breathing.
- **Refractory (non-reversible) Asthma** – refractory asthma is a type of asthma that does not respond to usual asthma medications.

02 | Symptoms

Unfortunately, COPD symptoms often do not appear until significant lung damage has occurred. The most common symptoms include:

- Increased shortness of breath
- Frequent coughing
- Increased breathlessness
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest

03 | Causes

There are three leading causes of COPD:

- **Smoking** – 90% of COPD patients are current or past smokers
- **Environmental Factors** – Long-term exposure and contact with harmful chemicals, dust or fumes can increase your risk for COPD

- **Genetic Factors** – Alpha-1 Antitrypsin Deficiency (AATD) is a genetic risk factor for emphysema².

04 | Treatment

The primary and most important step is to stop all smoking. This will slow the progression of COPD. Medications will also be prescribed to treat symptoms. Medications may include bronchodilators, inhaled steroids and oral steroids. In more severe cases, oxygen therapy may be necessary.

For support and awareness resources and more information on COPD, please visit:

<https://www.copdfoundation.org/>

Did You Know?

Kentucky has the highest rate of COPD in the United States

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/copd/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353685>

<https://www.copdfoundation.org/What-is-COPD/Understanding-COPD/What-is-COPD.aspx>