

Sinclairville Elementary Health Office News and Alerts

November is COPD Awareness Month

November 1, 2022



What is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, refers to a group of diseases that cause airflow blockage and breathing-related problems. It includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Signs and Symptoms

- Frequent coughing or wheezing.
- Excess phlegm, mucus, or sputum production.
- Shortness of breath.
- Trouble taking a deep breath.

What causes COPD?

In the United States, tobacco smoke is a key factor in the development and progression of COPD.⁷ Exposure to air pollutants in the home and workplace, genetic factors, and respiratory infections also play a role. In the developing world, indoor air quality is thought to play a larger role than it does in the United States. People should try to avoid inhaling tobacco smoke, home and workplace air pollutants, and respiratory infections to prevent developing COPD. Early detection of COPD may change its course and progress.

What are some tips to help?

Treatment of COPD requires a careful and thorough evaluation by a physician.^{3,13} COPD treatment can alleviate symptoms, decrease the frequency and severity of exacerbations, and increase exercise tolerance. Treatment options that your physician may consider include:

- Quit smoking. For people who smoke, the most important part of treatment is smoking cessation.

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- Avoid tobacco smoke and other air pollutants at home and at work.
 - Ask your doctor about pulmonary rehabilitation, which is a personalized treatment program that teaches COPD management strategies to improve quality of life. Programs may include plans that teach people how to breathe better and conserve their energy, as well as provide advice on food and exercise.
 - Take medication. Symptoms such as coughing or wheezing can be treated with medication.
 - Avoid lung infections. Lung infections can cause serious problems in people with COPD. Certain vaccines, such as flu and pneumococcal vaccines, are especially important for people with COPD. [Learn more about vaccination recommendations.](#) Respiratory infections should be treated with antibiotics, if appropriate.
 - Use supplemental oxygen. Some people may need to use a portable oxygen tank if their blood oxygen levels are low.

More Information

<https://www.cdc.gov/copd/resources.html>

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