

What You Should Know About COPD

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If you've been diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), you know how difficult it can be to do daily activities and moderate exercise without quickly losing your breath. While there is no cure to repair the damage to your lungs, COPD can be managed to help you feel better.

COPD is most often caused by smoking, but can also be caused by long-term exposure to industrial pollutants or infection. It is a combination of chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Due to partial blocked airways, symptoms may include shortness of breath, wheezing, excessive mucous and coughing.

Discussing your symptoms, smoking history or chemical exposures with your healthcare provider can assist with diagnosis. To evaluate how well your lungs are working, a pulmonary function test provides the most information. If COPD is found early, there are steps to prevent further lung damage and improve the results of treatment.

Remember, you can be more active if you learn to breathe better, exercise as directed and plan ahead to save energy. Elliot Pulmonary Rehabilitation can help you effectively manage your symptoms and obtain a better quality of life. To learn more about the program, call 663-2366.

Important Tips to Manage COPD:

- If you are still smoking – quit immediately! This will slow the progression of the disease and reduce your risk of other health problems.
- If medications are prescribed, understand why and how to take them. Take your medicines as prescribed and report new side effects if present. Using inhalers and nebulizers are only beneficial if taken correctly.
- Exercise improves heart and lung function. This can reduce shortness of breath. Exercise also builds strength and increases your ability to do more over time.
- Pulmonary Rehabilitation can provide a supervised, personalized treatment plan. Personalized treatment plans help to improve functional status.
- Proper nutrition and a healthy weight are also beneficial. Eating several small meals instead of three large ones can ease shortness of breath. It keeps your energy level steady and makes each meal easier to digest.
- Staying up-to-date regarding immunizations prevents illness and helps maintain one's reserve.

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