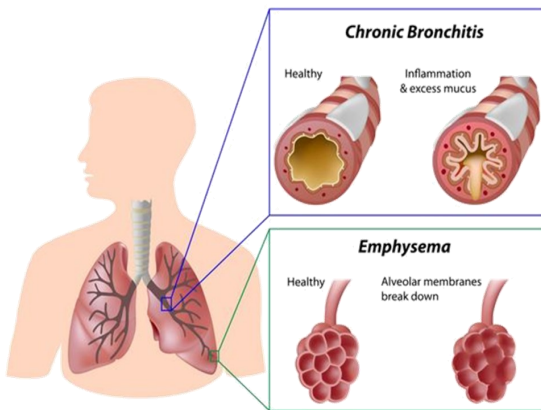


# Symptoms and Self Management

## COPD Community Exercise Clinic

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Smoking is the most important cause of these diseases, although non-smokers can also get COPD.



In **CHRONIC BRONCHITIS**, inflammation in the bronchial tubes (leading to the lungs) may cause narrowing, which makes breathing difficult. A chronic cough that brings up sputum (mucus) is present.

In **EMPHYSEMA**, lung tissue and the small air sacs (alveoli) at the end of the airways become damaged and air becomes trapped in the lungs leading to shortness of breath.

### RECOGNIZE FLARE-UPS

A **FLARE UP** is a worsening of the condition that includes these signs:

- Rapid increase in cough
- Increased sputum (mucus) production (especially if yellow or green)
- Increased shortness of breath

## Take Steps to Manage your COPD

- **Develop a COPD Action plan** Flare-ups can be serious and life-threatening. Prompt and effective treatment can help most people recover to the level of breathing before the flare-up. Develop a COPD ACTION PLAN with your care provider so you can be better prepared.
- **Quit Smoking** Although there is no cure for COPD, the best way to slow the progression of the disease is to quit smoking. If you smoke, quitting will reduce the severity of COPD and help you improve your quality of life.
- **Stay Active** Other than quitting smoking, physical activity is the most important tool for managing COPD. It helps strengthen your breathing muscles so you can breathe easier and feel better. Balance exercise and rest periods. Set realistic goals and make sure your exercise plan is tailored to your fitness level and breathing ability. The key is to start slowly and gradually increase your activity as you get fitter and stronger.
- **Maintain a Healthy Diet** If you have COPD, you may have a reduced appetite or feel too tired to prepare or eat meals. However, maintaining a healthy diet is important to keep up your energy and your body's natural defense system.

### AVOID TRIGGERS

**AVOID THESE COMMON TRIGGERS:** which can irritate your lungs and make your COPD symptoms worse.

- Air pollution, smog
- Second-hand smoke
- Strong fumes
- Perfume, scented products
- Cold air; hot and humid air

## Additional Resources

### [COPD Action Plan](#)

Canadian Cancer Society: call 1-866-366-3667 toll-free to talk to a quit coach  
[Canadian Lung association](#) 10 tips for a successful COPD exercise plan