Living With Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF COPD

You can have COPD and not know it. You may think you are just out of shape. You may think you are getting older. But you are working harder to breathe. Lung damage happens over time and starts before symptoms appear. COPD symptoms can differ from person to person.

You may have 1 or more of the following

- Shortness of breath
- Frequent cough with/without mucus (or smoker’s cough)
- Wheezing
- Fatigue

If you have chronic bronchitis

You may feel like you have a cough or cold that won’t go away. That is because your airways get tight, swollen, and filled with mucus. These things can reduce how much air flows in and out of your lungs, which can make breathing hard.

If you have emphysema

You may feel like you can’t breathe. You may have a tight feeling in your chest. That is because, like balloons, the tiny air sacs in your lungs can get stretched out. Then they may break down. Air gets trapped in them. So, there is less room for air to get in when you try to take a breath.

Tell your doctor about all your symptoms so that you can get the right treatment.
MANAGING YOUR COPD

Although COPD cannot be cured, it can be managed and treated. As part of your overall treatment plan, your doctor may talk with you about:

- Quitting smoking
- Flu and pneumonia vaccines
- Pulmonary rehab
- Prescription treatment options