

**COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)****Overview**

This is a disease of the lungs. It usually involves two lung conditions: emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD makes breathing difficult. It can interfere with your ability to be active. This disease gets worse over time, but it can be managed.

Causes

COPD is caused by breathing irritants, especially cigarette smoke. You can also develop this condition by being exposed to air pollution. Dust, fumes or smoke at your work can put you at risk for COPD. And in rare cases, COPD can be caused by a genetic defect.

Symptoms

You may not notice symptoms in the early stages of the disease. As it progresses, you may experience a chronic cough. You may have shortness of breath. You may wheeze, and you may feel a sensation of tightness in your chest. You may cough up mucus. You may feel tired. Your lips and fingernails may turn a bluish color. And, you may have frequent respiratory infections.

Treatment

Treatment options include medications and rehabilitation exercises. You may benefit from supplemental oxygen and from a healthier lifestyle. If these are not helpful, you may benefit from surgery to modify your lungs. A lung transplant procedure may also be an option. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.