

# HEALTH & FITNESS

- Advertorials

## Are you or someone you know suffering from **COPD?** (Chronic Pulmonary Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)

If so, you are unfortunately part of a very large population. The World Health Organization (WHO) reported in 2008, that COPD will be the number one cause of death by 2030. Current statistics show that their predictions just may come true. The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute estimates that 12 million adults have COPD and another 12 million are undiagnosed or developing COPD. In addition, COPD has become the third leading cause of death in the United States.

### **What is COPD?**

To put it most simply, COPD is a progressive disease (progressive means its gets worse over time) that makes it difficult to breathe. COPD can produce many symptoms of respiratory distress: cough, excessive mucus production, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and more. COPD sufferers may also get colds and flu more often. COPD symptoms can be very debilitating and make even every day activities difficult to perform. Severe COPD can cause other symptoms, such as swelling in your ankles, feet, or legs; weight loss; and lower muscle endurance. However, keep in mind that not everyone who has these symptoms has COPD...and vice versa.

### **How does COPD make it difficult to breathe?**

*COPD decreases airflow due to one or more of the following:*

1. Loss of airway and air sac elasticity.
2. Destruction of the airway walls between the air sacs.
3. Increased inflammation of the airway walls.
4. Highly increased mucus production, which can clog airways.

### **What causes COPD?**

Cigarette smoking continues to be the leading cause of COPD, both current and quitters. However, long-term exposures to other respiratory irritants, such as air pollution, allergens, dangerous chemicals, wildfire smoke, second hand cigarette smoke or even dust, can also contribute to COPD. COPD develops slowly, thus symptoms may start out very minor at first, then increase in severity over time. COPD is not contagious and you cannot catch it from another person.

### **What can we do? Quit smoking!**

If you keep smoking, the damage will occur faster than if you quit. Improve your indoor air quality by decreasing the amount of irritants and pollutants in your home and properly ventilating.

### **Get involved!**

Join the worldwide movement to improve our outdoor air quality. According to WHO, the lower the levels of air pollution in a city, the better the respiratory health (and cardiovascular health) of the population.

There is no known cure and doctors still don't know if the lung and airway damage is reversible. The good news is that with certain treatments (there are both conventional and natural options) and by making healthier lifestyle choices one can relieve symptoms, feel better, maintain an active life and even slow the progression of the disease.



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