

What is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a chronic inflammatory lung disease that is most often from smoking cigarettes, but it can also be caused by long-term exposure to irritating gases or particulate matter. People with COPD are at increased risk of developing heart disease, lung cancer and a variety of other conditions.

Conditions that Contribute to COPD:

- *Emphysema* is a condition where the air sacs (alveoli) at the end of the smallest air passage (bronchioles) of the lungs are damaged or destroyed as a result of the harmful exposure.
- *Chronic bronchitis* is inflammation of the lining of the bronchial tubes, which carry air to and from the air sacs (alveoli) of the lungs, and is characterized by a daily cough and sputum production.

Symptoms Include:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath.
- A chronic cough that produces mucus that may be clear, white, yellow or green.
- Need to clear your throat first thing in the morning due to excess mucus in your lungs.
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness.

What is a COPD Exacerbation?

An exacerbation is a “flare up” or a worsening of COPD symptoms that can persist for an extended period of time and often require oral steroids like prednisone and antibiotics for several days to get the symptoms under control. In more significant cases a COPD exacerbation can lead to hospitalization.

COPD is treatable. With proper management, most people with COPD can achieve good symptom control and quality of life, as well as reduced risk of other associated conditions.