



## What you need to know about...

### Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

#### What is COPD?

COPD is a lung disease that causes breathing difficulty. COPD is not a temporary disease—it is always present and its effects are long-term. Two lung conditions associated with COPD are:

- Chronic Bronchitis
- Emphysema

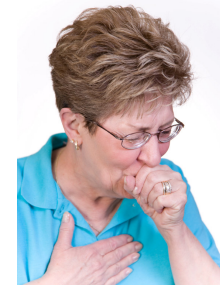
With both conditions there is an obstruction of the flow of air through the airways (breathing tubes). This occurs because the airways of the lungs are narrowed due to inflammation (swelling), muscles around the airways are tightened, and there is extra mucus production, which makes it difficult to get air in and out of the lungs. This limitation of airflow through the airways cannot be fully reversed and is usually progressive (worsens over time).

#### What are the symptoms of COPD?

There is a wide range in the severity of symptoms that occur with COPD. The main symptoms are:

- **Shortness of breath.** This symptom may or may not be present every day, and usually worsens over time. This may interfere with exercise and/or daily activities such as walking up a flight of stairs. You may feel breathless or feel you have to increase your effort to breathe.

- **Chronic cough and sputum production.** The cough is not always continuous, it may come and go, but it is generally present. When you cough, you may or may not cough up mucus from your lungs. Some people have a dry cough, while others have a loose cough that produces mucus.



- **Wheezing.** This is a high-pitched, whistling sound that occurs during breathing. It is most often heard when exhaling (breathing out), but may also be heard when inhaling (breathing in). Wheezing may or may not be present with COPD.
- **Chest tightness.** This often occurs after you have exerted yourself. You may feel a heaviness in your chest or the need to increase your effort to breathe by taking in a deep breath.

#### What can you do to prevent COPD?

Reduce your personal exposure to tobacco smoke, dust, fumes, gases, lung irritants, and indoor/outdoor air pollution.