HEALTH TIPS

Make Health Happen

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

LEARN WHAT YOU CAN DO TO COUGH LESS AND BREATHE MORE EASILY. YOUR DOCTOR CAN TELL YOU WHAT OPTIONS ARE BEST FOR YOU.

COPD stands for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It's a condition in which damage to your lungs has caused your airways to become partly blocked. That makes it hard to breathe. Bronchitis and emphysema are two types of COPD.

Smoking is the main cause of COPD. If you are still smoking, the most important thing you can do is quit.

Ways to breathe more easily

There is no cure for COPD, but there are many things you can do to help control it. Let your doctor help. He or she can tell you about the best treatment options, which may include:

- Long-term medicines – Inhaled medicines that you take every day, even when you are feeling fine.
- Quick-relief medicines – Inhaled medicines that you use when your breathing suddenly gets worse (your doctor can tell you when and how to use them).
- Breath training – Techniques that can help you when you feel short of breath.
- Oxygen treatments – If your oxygen level is low, wearing oxygen can help you feel better and live longer.

Here are more ideas that can help.

Check one that you'd like to try:

__ Try to avoid the flu by getting a flu shot each year.

__ Wash your hands often with soap and warm water.

__ Look into ways to smoke less:

- ❑ Join a class to help you stop smoking.
- ❑ Learn about nicotine patches or gum.
- ❑ Go to lungusa.org for more ideas.

__ Ask your doctor about ways to help control your cough such as:

- ❑ Breathing exercises
- ❑ Visualization
- ❑ Meditation

__ See your doctor for a spirometry test each year.

__ Think of a form of exercise that you would like to do and discuss it with your doctor.

__ Try to stay away from things that can bother your lungs like dust, pollen, smoke, cold air and pets.

Whichever idea you choose, bring this HealthTip with you to your next checkup. Your doctor will have more advice and information to help you succeed.

Source: Living with COPD, October 2013, lung.org/lung-disease/copd

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Helpful phone numbers for UniCare members only

Customer Care Center: **1-800-782-0095 (TTY 1-866-378-1634)**

MedCall: **1-888-850-1108 (TTY 1-800-368-4424)**

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