

COPD

USC Pulmonary Clinic

What is it? COPD stands for chronic obstructive lung disease. It can be caused by smoking, exposure to smoke and other environmental toxins or a genetic disorder. It can get worse over time if you continue to smoke! Over time, your airways lose their ability to stretch. When you exhale, the tiny air sacs collapse and air gets trapped inside. There are two main types of COPD. One is chronic bronchitis which is when you cough up lots of phlegm and have shortness of breath. You can also have emphysema, which is when your lung cells are stretched and permanently damaged.

How is it treated? Most importantly, STOP SMOKING!! Ask your doctor to discuss medications to help you stop. Depending on your breathing tests and symptoms, your doctor will start you on special inhalers. Everyone should have a rescue inhaler that is used as needed, when you suddenly become short of breath. You may also be put on a variety of "maintenance inhalers" that should be used everyday, no matter how good you feel!

DO:

- *STOP SMOKING IMMEDIATELY
- *Take your inhalers as directed by your doctor
- *Do wear your oxygen as prescribed
- *Call your doctor if you have increased shortness of breath, fever >100.4 without another source, or increase in phlegm production.
- *Maintain a healthy weight
- *Keep exercising-either pulmonary rehab or do your previous exercise regimen
- *Call your doctor if you cough up blood
- *Get your flu and pneumovax vaccines

Don't:

- *Think that it's too late to stop smoking!
- *Stop using your inhalers because you think your breathing is better
- *Miss appointments
- *Stop exercising
- *Stop wearing your oxygen because you feel people will "stare at you or judge you"

My medicines:
