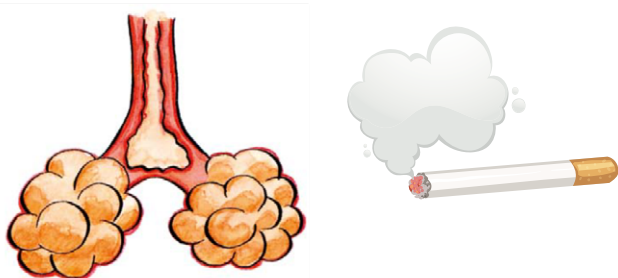


COPD. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

COPD is also often known as *chronic bronchitis*.

It is characterized by obstructed airflow in the lungs, due to an inflammation of the lining of the bronchial tubes. This inflammation is caused by damaging exposure to particles, especially from **cigarettes**.



Inflamed obstructed
bronchial tube

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include a cough and mucous production for weeks at a time; patients feel short of breath when they walk up a hill or steps, and colds often go to their chest.

How is COPD diagnosed?

Patients do a spirometry test. This involves blowing into a device so as to calculate the amount of air your lungs can inhale and exhale when you breathe.



What can you do to get better?

- The principal treatment to stop the progression of the disease is to stop smoking.
- Get regular exercise.
- Control your weight.
- Avoid catching cold and sudden changes of temperature.
- Have the flu jab and the pneumococcal vaccine every year.
- The medication to help improve the symptoms is administered with inhalers. They have a dilatory and anti-inflammatory effect on the bronchial tubes. They are used in a certain order and with the correct technique, which must be reviewed periodically.
- If you are treated with oxygen, it is important to breathe it at least 16 hours per day.
- You may find it helps to do respiratory physiotherapy exercises.



When should you consult the Health Care Services?

Consult your doctor or the nurse, or go to the emergency ward if it is serious, when you notice:

- An increase in the feeling of breathlessness, coughing or wheezing.
- Changes in the mucus: a yellow or green colour, thicker.
- Fever or shivering.

