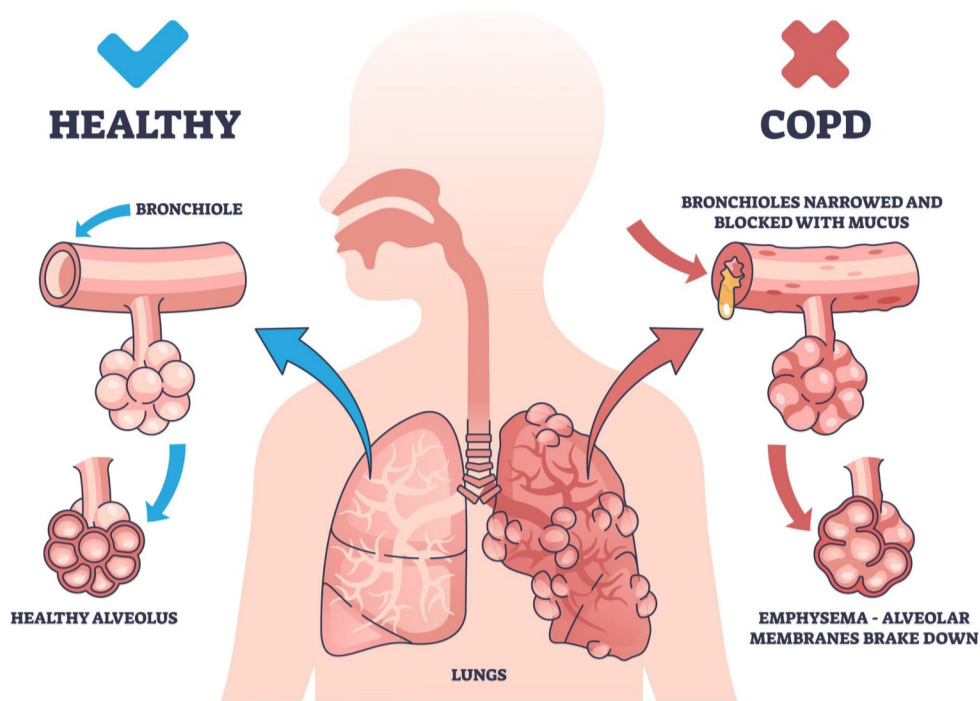




# COPD: What You Should Know

Information for residents and families going home



## What Is COPD?

COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) is a lung condition that makes breathing harder. It does not go away, but you can manage symptoms at home.

### COPD can cause:

- Shortness of breath
- Coughing (with or without mucus)
- Wheezing
- Feeling tired or low on energy

## Avoid Common Triggers

Some things can make breathing worse. Try to avoid:

- Smoke and dirty air
- Strong smells or chemicals
- Dust, mold, or pet hair
- Cold air or fast weather changes
- Colds or flu

## Medications for COPD

Common COPD medications may include:

- **Inhalers** (used every day or when needed)
- **Nebulizer treatments**
- **Oral medications** (pills)

Common medication names you may hear:

- Albuterol
- Spiriva
- Advair
- Symbicort

**Do not skip doses, even if you are feeling better.**

## Healthy Habits at Home

- Do not smoke or vape
- Get recommended vaccines
- Eat healthy meals and drink fluids as directed
- Stay active as you are able

## Follow-Up Care

- Keep all follow-up appointments
- Bring a list of your medications to each visit
- Ask questions if you are unsure about your care
- Call your provider if symptoms worsen

## When to Call for Help

Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you notice:

- Breathing gets worse
- You cough more or have more mucus
- Mucus changes color
- You have a fever
- Your rescue inhaler is used more often

## Call 911 right away if you have:

- You cannot catch your breath
- You have chest pain
- Your lips or nails look blue or gray
- You feel confused or very sleepy
- Your rescue inhaler does not help

## Breathing Technique

This breathing technique can help reduce shortness of breath:

### Pursed-lip breathing

- Breathe in slowly through your nose
- Breathe out slowly through pursed lips (like blowing out a candle)
- Use this during activity or when you feel short of breath



## Saving Your Energy

Managing your energy can help prevent breathing problems.

- Take breaks and avoid rushing
- Sit when possible during daily activities
- Spread tasks throughout the day

## Rescue Inhaler

Use your rescue inhaler if you have:

- Sudden trouble breathing
- Wheezing or chest tightness

Call your provider if you need it more often.

## Questions or Concerns?

If you have questions about your COPD care, contact your healthcare provider.

This handout is for education only and does not replace medical advice.