

What Is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a chronic lung disease that makes it harder to breathe over time.

There are two types of COPD:

- Chronic bronchitis is inflammation of the lining of the airways that carry air to and from the air sacs of the lungs. Symptoms can include daily cough and mucus (phlegm) production.
- Emphysema occurs when there is damage to the smallest air passages of the lungs from exposure to cigarette smoke and other irritants.

How to live better with COPD

- Stop smoking.
- Take your medications.
- Check oxygen level as directed.
- Keep your airway clear.
- Ensure your home is free of mold.
- Get my pneumonia and flu vaccines.
- Practice pursed lip breathing.
- Use your inhaler as directed.
- Walk daily, gradually increasing time and/or distance.

Novant Health programs and support services

- **Stopping smoking:** Novant Health offers classes. Call **910-264-9200** for more information.
- **COPD navigation:** If you are admitted with COPD to Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center, a COPD navigator may provide you with one-on-one education about this disease and lend support to help you stay as healthy as possible. Call **910-264-9200** for more information.
- **Pulmonary rehabilitation:** The purpose of this program is to improve the quality of life of patients with breathing problems, including COPD. For more information on the program, call **910-662-9901** or talk to your provider about a referral.
 - Novant Health Pulmonary Medicine offers COPD patients medical support, including inpatient care at Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center for critically ill patients. A team of dedicated providers see patients five days a week.
- **Transitional disease management support:** After discharging from the hospital, patients with COPD who are at high risk for readmission may receive follow-up phone calls from a nurse and potentially a home visit from a community paramedic to help make a smooth transition back to living at home. Call **910-667-7275** to reach the transitional disease management team.
- Walk-in and Urgent Care is available for any urgent medical needs. Visit NovantHealth.org to find the walk-in care location nearest you.
- VitaLine provides free, confidential access to non-urgent health information from experienced registered nurses and other professionally trained staff who can help connect you to the care you need. Call **888-815-5188** to reach the VitaLine team who will follow up with you at their earliest convenience.

Symptoms of a COPD flare

- Increased cough
- Increased shortness of breath
- Increased heart rate
- Increased mucus production/chest congestion
- Wheezing
- Fever
- Confusion or excessive sleepiness
- Swelling in feet or ankles
- Change in mucus color

It is important that you or a loved one call your provider at the earliest sign of a COPD flare. Your provider will help you make decisions on the best course of action for you. This may include new medicines.



Better breathing tip: It's normal to hold your shoulders tense and high. Before starting any breathing technique, take a minute to lower your shoulders, close your eyes and relax.

Additional references and resources

More information on quitting tobacco can be found at:

- Smokefree.gov
- QuitlineNC.com
- Quitnow.net
- **800-QUITNOW**

NewHanoverHealthAdvantage.com

Have a question about your health? Call our Nurse Line at **910-667-7275**.

