

CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE

(COPD)



WHAT IS CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a lung disease that is preventable and treatable. This condition is characterized by abnormal inflammation of the lungs that limits airflow. This disease includes two main conditions: chronic bronchitis or emphysema. This condition is not curable, but it can be controlled. Doctors can help reduce its symptoms and complications.

WHO'S AT RISK?

People exposed to:

- Tobacco, second hand smoke or ex-smokers.
- Prolonged exposure to industrial and occupational pollutants.
- Prolonged exposure to environmental pollution inside or outside the home.

MAIN SYMPTOMS

- Breathing difficulty
- Feeling short of breath
- Wheezing / Whistling
- Coughing with or without phlegm
- Excessive mucus
- Weakness
- Fatigue

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

It is important to diagnose COPD in its early stages. Most doctors can make a diagnosis through a series of questions about the patient's symptoms.

Other studies

- Chest X-rays
- Spirometry (a lung function study that measures a person's breathing capacity. This is the test used to diagnose, classify and treat the disease).
- Blood tests
- Electrocardiography and echocardiography
- If COPD is suspected in young people or those who have never smoked, a test is done to detect a blood protein called "alpha 1-antitrypsin".

HOW IS COPD TREATED?

Although symptoms can be relieved with treatment, there is no cure for COPD. Once the airways and lungs have been damaged, the damage is irreversible. Treatment may include:

- Lifestyle modification.
- If you smoke, stop smoking.
- Balanced diet and maintaining a healthy weight.
- Avoid areas where there is air pollution.
- It prevents abrupt changes in the weather.
- Learn breathing exercises that allow you to breathe more easily.
- Stay as active as possible.
- Get a yearly flu shot.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO TREAT COPD?

- Prevents progression of the condition
- Relieves symptoms
- Improves exercise tolerance
- Improves general health status
- Prevents complications
- Prevents exacerbations