

COPD



HW 2020

Wallingford Health Improvement Plan Initiative

Focus Area: Chronic Disease, COPD

For more information call 203-294-2065
health@wallingfordct.gov

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The following information could help you to **BREATHE BETTER!**

What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a term used to describe several progressive lung diseases including emphysema, chronic bronchitis, (non-reversible) Asthma, and some forms of bronchiectasis. This disease is recognized by **increased breathlessness**. Many people mistake their increased breathlessness and coughing as a normal part of aging. In early stages of the disease, you're symptoms may be mild. That is why it is important to discuss a **spirometry test** with your provider if noticing any of these symptoms, as it is the best way to ensure a correct diagnosis.

What are the signs and symptoms of COPD?

- Increased breathlessness
- Frequent coughing (with and without sputum)
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest

What are the risk factors and common causes of COPD?

Most cases of COPD are caused by inhaling pollutants; that includes smoking (cigarette smoking, pipes, cigars, etc.) and second hand smoke. Fumes, chemicals and dust found in many work environments are also contributing factors for many individuals who develop COPD. Genetics can also play a role in COPD.

Breathing Exercises

If practiced regularly, breathing exercises can help rid the lungs of accumulated stale air, increase oxygen levels and allow the diaphragm to return to its job of helping you breathe.

- Pursed Lip Breathing:

This exercise reduces the number of breaths you take and keeps your airways open longer.

To practice it, simply breathe in through your nose and breathe out at least twice as long through your mouth, with pursed lips.

- Belly Breathing:

Start by breathing in through your nose. Pay attention to how your belly fills up with air. Breathe out through your mouth at least two to three times as long as your inhale. Relax your neck and shoulders as you retrain your diaphragm to take on the work of helping to fill and empty your lungs.

For full videos and more information on breathing exercises visit:

<http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/protecting-your-lungs/breathing-exercises.html>



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