

# COPD and Asthma Awareness



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and asthma are both common inflammatory lung diseases with symptoms such as chest tightness, shortness of breath, wheezing, and persistent coughing. A person whose lungs have been damaged due to poorly controlled asthma and other irritants is at increased risk of developing COPD.

## STAY AWARE!

COPD is the 3<sup>rd</sup> leading cause of death worldwide.

Women are 37% more likely to have COPD than men.

Asthma rates are highest in multiracial/non-Hispanic adults in the US.

1 in 13 people have asthma (approximately 25 million people in the US).

COPD and asthma cause your airways to swell and become blocked with mucus, restricting your ability to breathe.

Even if you are taking prescription medication, vaccines are one of the safest ways to protect your health. Talk to your doctor about the benefits of the following vaccines:

- COVID-19
- Influenza
- Pneumococcal
- Tdap
- Tuberculosis (TB)
- Zoster

\* There may be other vaccines recommended for you based on your lifestyle, travel habits, and other factors. Talk to your primary care specialist about which vaccines are right for you.

**FACT**  
**African Americans adults are MORE LIKELY to experience severe and uncontrolled asthma compared to other racial/ethnic groups.**



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## How can I lower my general risk for COPD and asthma?

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**EXERCISE:** Regular exercise for about 150 minutes per week is part of a healthy lifestyle. Exercising can help make it easier to breathe and help you live an active life.

**EAT A HEALTHY DIET:** Eating a diet that is rich in whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables, fiber, and plenty of water is important to reduce your risk for COPD.

**QUIT SMOKING:** The best way to prevent COPD and other lung diseases is to quit smoking. Smoking is the leading cause of COPD, followed by exposure to repeated lung irritants such as air pollutants, chemical fumes, and secondhand smoke.

**AVOID POLLUTION:** Try to protect yourself against chemicals, dust, and fumes in your home and at your workplace. Long-term exposure to air pollution can play a role in developing COPD.

**GET SUPPORT:** Supportive family and friends can help improve your health. They may encourage you to take care of yourself, engage in protective measures, or enroll in a smoking cessation program with you to help lower your blood pressure.