

Smoking and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Information on the effects of smoking on your lungs and breathing



**QUIT
YOUR
WAY**
with our
support

What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is the name for a range of respiratory conditions that cause long-term damage to the lungs and airways. These include chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

COPD is a chronic progressive disease and symptoms include:

- Breathlessness when active or resting
- Cough
- Regular mucous/phlegm production
- Repeated chest infections
- Tiredness
- Tight chest/wheezing

COPD exacerbations are when your symptoms suddenly get worse and are often triggered by infection.

This may result in the need for urgent treatment at home or emergency hospital admission.

Smoking and COPD

Whilst other things can cause COPD, the most significant risk factor for developing this long-term condition is smoking tobacco. Smoking causes damage to the airways and lungs. The chemicals in tobacco irritate the lining of the lungs causing inflammation, narrowing of the lung airways, airflow obstruction, increased production of mucous and in very severe cases can cause a reduction in oxygen supply.

Mucous in the lungs is a good breeding ground for bacteria and this often results in frequent chest infections and coughing to clear your chest.

Stopping smoking can be difficult but it is worth it.

Benefits of Stopping Smoking

Stopping smoking in the early stages of COPD can make a big difference and slow progression of the condition. Whilst damage already done to your airways cannot be reversed, giving up smoking is the most important thing you can do to help yourself and stop your condition from getting worse.

It is never too late to stop smoking at any stage of the disease as you are likely to feel a lot better.

Stopping smoking can:

- Improve the quality of your life and those close to you
- Decrease the risk factors for developing other illness
- Reduce the number of COPD exacerbations
- Limit hospital admissions
- Improve breathlessness and the ability to exercise
- Help you to live longer

We understand that most people try to quit several times before they stop smoking. Support to look at what has helped and perhaps stalled you in the past will inform future quits and is available as often as you require.

Pulmonary Rehab Service

Pulmonary rehabilitation is an effective treatment for people with a chronic lung condition such as COPD. It's suitable for all abilities and levels of fitness and takes place in a number of community venues across Lothian. It's fun, informative and can make daily activities such as climbing stairs or carrying shopping much easier.

All patients are invited to attend an individual session prior to starting pulmonary rehab. This gives you the opportunity to discuss your lung condition and any difficulties you may be experiencing. You can ask your health professional to refer you.



How can Quit Your Way help you to stop smoking?

We appreciate that stopping smoking is a challenge, but we are here to support you to quit. You will be more likely to succeed in your quit attempt with medication and support from our specialist service. All support and medication is FREE.

We know that stress, socialising, habits and boredom can be triggers to smoke. Between us, we can set up a realistic plan, tailored just for you and help you choose a suitable nicotine replacement product or medication if required.

Information about stopping smoking is available from:

Quit Your Way Lothian

[Tinyurl.com/qywlothian](https://tinyurl.com/qywlothian)



Quit Your Way Scotland

0800 84 84 84

QuitYourWay.scot

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If you would like more information about COPD visit the My Lungs My life website:
mylungsmylife.org