This book was created for patients and their families to help them manage their lung disease.

Your doctor or nurse chose this section because they felt it would be most helpful for you.

There are 10 sections in the COPD book and a list of definitions in the glossary section. Share this information with family, friends and those who help care for you.
COPD and Other Conditions

People who have COPD often have other chronic illnesses at the same time. These other illnesses are called *comorbidities* (ko-mor-bid-i-teez).

Many of these other illnesses share a common cause. For example, using tobacco can cause both COPD and heart disease.
Chronic Illnesses with COPD

Some health illnesses that often occur with COPD are:

- diabetes
- heart disease
- high blood pressure (hypertension)
- osteoporosis
- osteoarthritis/rheumatoid arthritis
- obstructive sleep apnea (OSA)
- depression
- sinusitis
- allergic rhinitis
- gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)—acid reflux
- lung cancer

Having other chronic illnesses can make managing COPD more difficult. It’s important to know how to manage these other illnesses and learn more about how they can affect your breathing.

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

In some people, the tube (esophagus) that connects the stomach to the mouth becomes irritated by stomach acid that backs up. This is called reflux. Reflux can cause heartburn or an acid taste in your mouth. Everyone has some reflux, but it is considered gastroesophageal reflux disease, (GERD) when it happens often. COPD can increase your risk of GERD. Tell your doctor or nurse if you have heartburn or reflux.

What You Can Do

1. Lose weight if you are overweight.
2. If you smoke, try to quit. Smoking can make GERD worse.
3. Raise the head of your bed by 6 inches.
4. Don’t wear tight-fitting clothes.
5. Eat smaller meals.
6. Stop eating or drinking at least 3 hours before bedtime.
7. Limit fried and fatty foods, caffeine, alcohol, sodas and carbonated drinks, chocolate, peppermint, citrus fruits and juices.
8. Limit tomatoes, tomato juice and tomato-based foods.
Heart disease

Heart disease is often called cardiovascular disease. Cardiovascular disease affects your heart and your blood vessels and may include:

- high blood pressure (*hypertension*)
- **coronary artery disease**—angina, heart attack, high cholesterol
- **stroke**
- **heart failure**
- **peripheral vascular/arterial disease**
- high blood pressure in the lungs (*pulmonary hypertension*)
- heart failure caused by lung disease (*cor pulmonale*)

There is no cure for heart disease. Once you have it, you’ll always have it. The good news is that there are many things you can do to manage your heart disease and prevent future problems.

**Learn more about cardiovascular disease:**
www.mainehealth.org/cvh

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**tips**

**What You Can Do**

1. Talk with your doctor or nurse about a healthy eating plan.

2. Stay at a healthy weight.

3. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days of the week.

4. Check your blood pressure regularly.

5. Use your medicines correctly.

6. Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.

7. Reduce stress through yoga, meditation or other relaxation exercises.
Diabetes

What is diabetes? Most of the food you eat is broken down into a sugar called glucose. **Insulin** brings sugar into your body’s cells so that it can be used for energy. When you have diabetes, your body does not make enough insulin, or the insulin may not work correctly. This may keep the sugar from moving into your cells. This leads to high levels of sugar building up in your bloodstream.

Some of the medicines that you take for COPD, especially steroids, may cause an increase in your blood sugar. Lung or other infections may also increase your blood sugar.

There is no cure for diabetes, but there are many different things you can do to manage your blood sugar and reduce the risk of serious health problems.

**Common signs of high blood sugar include:**
- blurry vision
- the need to urinate (empty your bladder) often
- being very thirsty
- always feeling hungry
- frequent infections

**Learn more about diabetes:**
www.mainehealth.org/diabetes

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**What You Can Do**

1. Talk with your doctor or nurse about a healthy eating plan.
2. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days of the week.
3. Use your medicine correctly.
4. Test your blood sugar.
5. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your diabetes plan.
Osteoporosis

**Osteoporosis** is an illness in which your bones become brittle and fragile from a loss of calcium or lack of vitamin D. It may lead to a higher risk of broken bones (fractures).

**You are more likely to have osteoporosis if you:**

- don't get enough calcium or vitamin D in the food you eat
- had surgery to lose weight
- spend a lot of time sitting or lying in bed
- don't do any weight-bearing exercise like walking, running, jumping and weight lifting
- drink more than two alcoholic drinks a day
- use tobacco
- are underweight

**Use of steroids and other medicines**

Medicines used to treat COPD flare-ups like prednisone, cortisone and inhaled steroids can increase your risk of osteoporosis.

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**What You Can Do**

1. Talk with your doctor or nurse about a healthy eating plan.

2. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days of the week.

3. Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.

4. Take your medicines and vitamins correctly.

5. Ask your doctor about a bone density test.
Depression and anxiety

COPD may make you feel sad, scared, stressed or even angry. It is common to feel this way.

**Symptoms of depression:**
- lack of energy
- weight loss
- trouble sleeping
- feeling frustrated or overwhelmed
- feeling tired all the time
- feeling helpless
- little interest or pleasure in doing things

**Symptoms of anxiety:**
- being fearful of the unknown
- feeling like something bad is about to happen
- feeling nervous
- trouble breathing or catching your breath
- a sense of terror
- dizziness
- chest pains
- tingling in your toes or fingers

If depression and anxiety are getting in the way of living your life or causing you stress, get help. Talk with your doctor or nurse about seeing a behavioral health professional.

**What You Can Do**

1. Attend pulmonary rehabilitation classes.

2. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week.

3. Learn to control your breathing.

4. Attend a support group for people living with COPD.

5. Spend time with family and friends.

6. Listen to music or meditate.

7. Do something you enjoy every day. Make yourself the most important person for a brief period every day.

8. Talk to a behavioral health professional.

**IMPORTANT! If you need information and help right away, contact:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maine Suicide and Crisis Hotline:</th>
<th>National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-888-568-1112</td>
<td>1-800-273-8255</td>
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Obstructive sleep apnea

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) is a condition that can cause you to stop breathing during sleep. These pauses in breathing usually last 10 seconds or longer and cause the oxygen in your blood to drop. OSA can occur more often if you have COPD and can lead to heart failure, high blood pressure and memory problems.

Signs that you may have OSA:

- You are sleepy during the day, even after sleeping all night.
- You snore or make choking sounds when you sleep.
- You have been seen to have pauses during sleep.
- You wake up in the morning with a headache.

You are more likely to have OSA if you

- have severe COPD
- are overweight
- have nasal congestion
- have acid reflux
- use high doses of inhaled steroids
- smoke

Talk with your doctor or nurse if you have any of these symptoms. If you have OSA, treating your OSA may also improve your COPD.

What You Can Do

1. Ask your doctor or nurse about testing for OSA.
2. Talk with your doctor or nurse about a healthy eating plan.
3. Stay at a healthy weight.
4. Get at least 30 minutes of physical activity 5 days of the week.
5. Quit smoking and avoid secondhand smoke.
6. Use your continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) device as recommended by your doctor.
Advance directives (sometimes called living wills): forms that you fill out once you decide what is important to you if you should get into a health crisis

Air trapping: when it is difficult to exhale completely

Allergic rhinitis: runny nose caused by allergies

Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency: a genetic disease that can cause COPD

Alveoli: air sacs

Arteries: blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood away from the heart to the body’s cells, tissues and organs

Arterial blood gas (ABG): a blood test from an artery that measures how well your lungs are able to move oxygen into your blood and remove carbon dioxide from your blood

Asbestos: mineral that can be woven into fabrics and is used in fire-resistant and insulating materials such as brake linings

Bone density test: x-ray that measures bone loss

Bronchial tubes: air passages or airways

Bronchodilators: medicines that make you breathe better by relaxing the muscles in your air passages and keep them from squeezing

Carbon dioxide: waste air

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation: emergency lifesaving procedure that is done when someone’s heart has stopped

Cataracts: clouding of the lens in your eye

Comorbidities: other chronic diseases a person has that make treating chronic disease more difficult

Continuous flow oxygen: oxygen that runs constantly through a tube into your nose and throat

Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP): a device prescribed by a doctor or nurse to treat OSA

COPD Action Plan: a guide to help you recognize the early signs of a flare-up and what you should do when a flare-up occurs

Coronary arteries: blood vessels that supply oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle

Coronary artery disease: a disease in which a waxy substance called plaque builds up inside your coronary arteries

Cor pulmonale: a condition that causes the right side of the heart to fail

CT scan: a picture of the inside of a part of your body

Diabetes: a condition in which your body does not make enough insulin or does not use insulin correctly

Diaphragm: a large muscle that sits below your lungs and does most of the work of breathing

Dose: amount of medicine

Echocardiogram: an ultrasound of the heart

Electrocardiogram: a test that checks for problems with the electrical activity of your heart

Energy conservation: saving energy

Esophagus: passage that connects the mouth and the stomach

Exacerbation: flare-up of your symptoms

Expectorant: medicine that loosens mucus so it’s easier to cough up

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD): acid reflux

Glaucoma: a condition of increased pressure within your eyeball, causing gradual loss of sight

Healthcare agent: the person you want to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself

Heart failure: a condition in which your heart can’t pump enough blood to meet your body’s needs

Hospice: care for people closer to the end of life who want their treatment focused on comfort

Hypertension: high blood pressure

Inflammatory: swelling

Inhaler: device that contains medicine as a mist or powder

Glossary
Insulin: hormone that carries sugar into your cells so that it can be used for energy

Intravenous: in a vein

Long-acting (controller) medicines: medicines taken once or twice a day that prevent shortness of breath

Lung transplantation: surgically replacing one or both of your lungs

Lung volume reduction surgery: surgically removing diseased parts of one or both of your lungs

Mucolytics: medicines that break up mucus

Nebulizer: device that turns liquid medicine into mist

Nicotine replacement: medicines that replace the nicotine you do not get when you quit smoking

Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA): a condition that causes you to have periods when you stop breathing during sleep

Osteoarthritis: mechanical wear and tear on joints

Osteoporosis: illness that makes your bones brittle and fragile

Oxygenated: combined or mixed with oxygen

Palliative care: care provided at any stage of an illness focused on preventing suffering, managing symptoms and coordinating communication between the many caregivers

Peripheral vascular/arterial disease: a condition of the blood vessels that supply the legs and feet. It leads to narrowing and hardening of the arteries. This causes decreased blood flow, which can injure nerves and other tissues.

Pneumonia: lung infection

Pollutants: waste materials that are harmful to air, soil or water

Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST): a medical order stating a patient’s wishes regarding treatments that are commonly used in a medical crisis

Pulmonary hypertension: high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs

Pulse dose oxygen: oxygen that flows when you breathe in through your nose and stops when you breathe out

Pulse oximeter: a machine that measures the oxygen in your blood with a clip that goes on your finger, toe or earlobe

Quick-relief (rescue) medicine: medicine that starts to work in a few minutes and lasts a few hours

Reflux: when stomach acid backs up and irritates the esophagus

Rheumatoid arthritis: when your immune system mistakenly attacks the lining of your joints, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in joint deformity

Secondhand smoke: smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar, pipe or hookah

Silica: a very common mineral found in many materials common on construction sites, including soil, sand, concrete, masonry, rock, granite and landscaping materials. The dust created by cutting, grinding or drilling can cause lung disease and cancer.

Sinusitis: swelling of the air cavities within the passages of the nose. Sinusitis can be caused by infection, but also can be caused by allergies and irritation of the sinuses.

Spirometry: a test to see how well your lungs are working

Sputum: mucus in your lungs

Stroke: when blood flow to an area of your brain is cut off

Suppressant: medicine to help you cough less

Thirdhand smoke: tobacco particles that stay on surfaces long after burning tobacco has been put out

Thrush: infection of the mouth and throat

Trachea: windpipe

Ultrasound: a test that uses sound waves to see inside your body

Vaping devices: electronic cigarettes, cigars and pipes that produce steam vapor when smoked