



Fact Sheet

COPD

(chronic bronchitis and emphysema) is a slowly progressive disease that makes it hard to breathe.

Do you

- * Have a cough with phlegm most of the time?
- * Get breathless or wheezy easily?
- * Smoke or have smoked?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, you may have COPD, a permanent disease that makes it hard to breathe. Talk with your Pegasus family doctor or practice nurse about COPD today. This team can help with advice and support and help to ease your symptoms.

COPD can be prevented and managed.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

What is COPD?

(chronic bronchitis and emphysema) is a slowly progressive disease that makes it hard to breathe.

COPD usually takes many years to develop before shortness of breath becomes enough of a problem that help is needed for breathing. For this reason, COPD is usually a problem of older adults and is most commonly diagnosed in individuals over the age of 60.

Do I have COPD?

Anyone who has a cough or shortness of breath should talk with his or her family doctor or practice nurse. Morning cough, for example, is not normal. Shortness of breath while exercising, climbing stairs, or walking can also be a sign of a breathing problem.

You will need a breathing test to check your lung function

Preventing COPD

If you are a smoker – STOP! Cigarette smoking is the main cause of COPD. Stopping smoking is the single most important thing you can do to prevent lung cancer.

Your Pegasus family practice will be able to give you advice and support if you are thinking about stopping smoking. Pegasus patients can use the highly successful PEGS programme (Preparation, Education, Giving Up, Staying Smokefree). Talk with your Pegasus family doctor or practice nurse for more details, and remember you are twice as likely to give up with the help of a health professional.

How your family practice team can help

If you have COPD, your family practice team can help you with:

- * Ways to control breathlessness
- * Support for stopping smoking with PEGS, our smoking cessation

programme

- * Medication and advice on when to use it
- * Advice on exercise and community exercise groups
- * Advice on eating well
- * Free immunization against influenza for those aged over 65 and those with COPD to help prevent chest infections
- * Ask about a FREE visit to your doctor to develop a plan to manage your COPD. This self-management plan is written with your doctor so you both know what is in place to keep you well and to help you recognize when you are becoming unwell and what to do about it,

