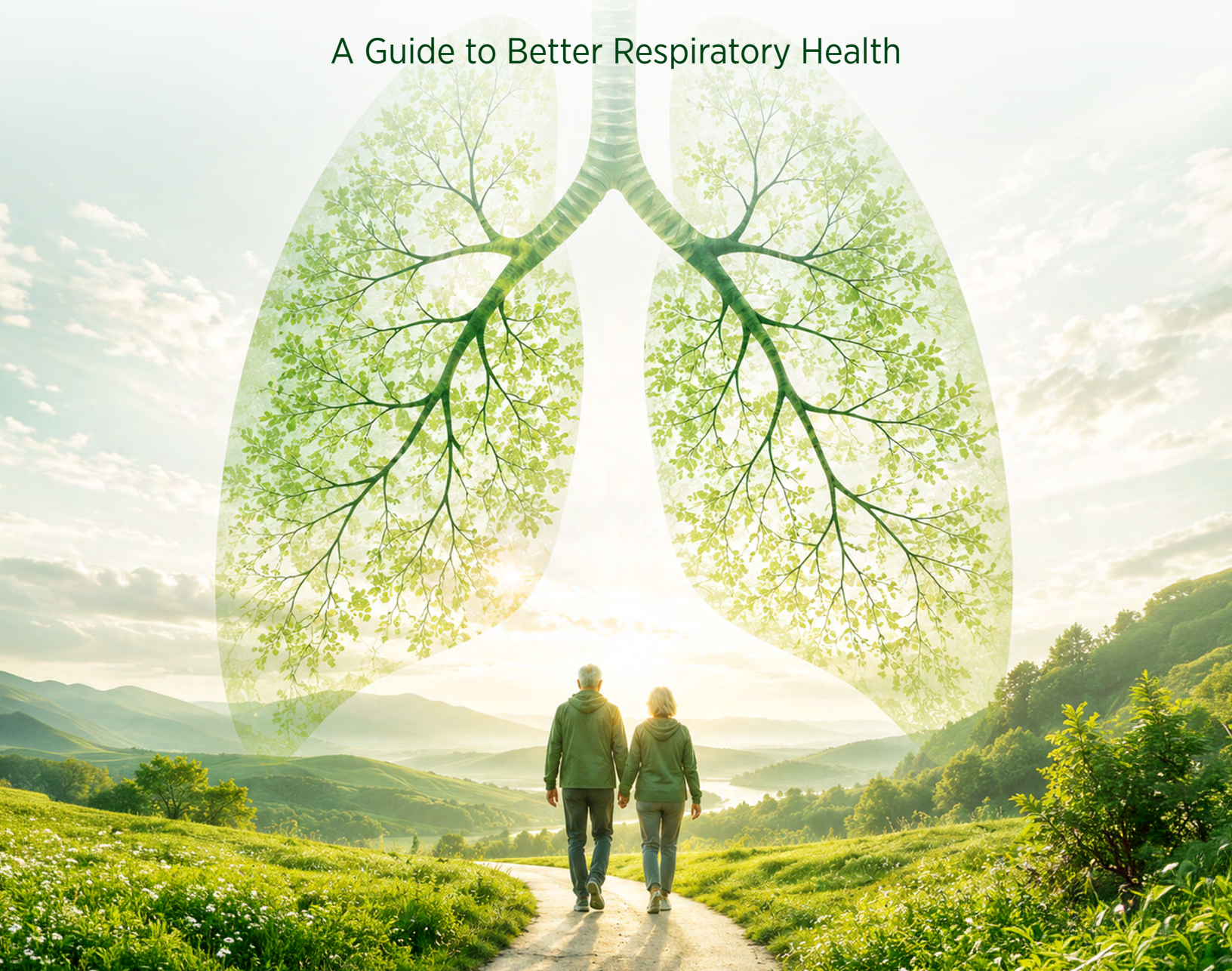


Understanding **COPD**

A Guide to Better Respiratory Health



DASCO
Home Medical Equipment

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How DASCO SUPPORTS COPD CARE

COPD can make everyday activities more difficult and impact your energy, independence and overall quality of life.

At DASCO Home Medical Equipment, we're here to help you breathe easier and live well every day.



RESPIRATORY SUPPORT

Quality equipment and ongoing care to help you breathe easier.



EDUCATION & RESOURCES

Helpful information and tools to understand COPD and manage symptoms.



BETTER DAILY LIVING

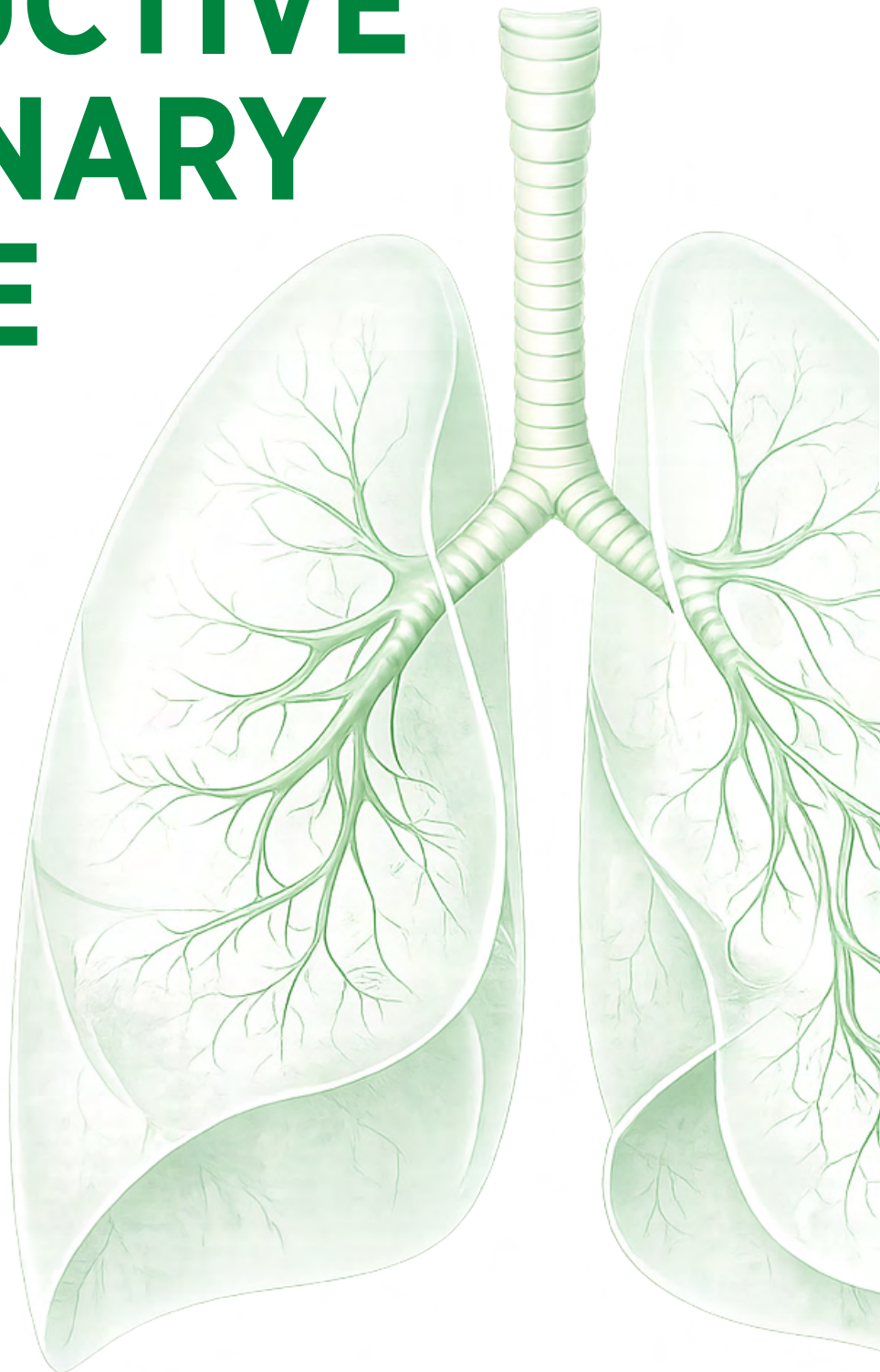
Solutions and encouragement to help you stay active and live life with confidence.



Understanding **CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE**

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a term used to describe chronic lung conditions that make it harder to breathe.

COPD can't be reversed, but with the right care and support, you can manage symptoms, feel better, and maintain an active and independent life.



How the **LUNGS** **WORK**

Your lungs bring oxygen into your body and remove carbon dioxide when you breathe out. It's a simple process that happens every second of every day.

1

AIR IN

You breathe in through your nose or mouth.

2

THROUGH THE AIRWAYS

Air travels down the trachea (windpipe) and into the bronchial tubes.

3

SMALLER PASSAGES

The air moves through smaller tubes, like branches on a tree. Tiny hairs called cilia help push mucus out.

4

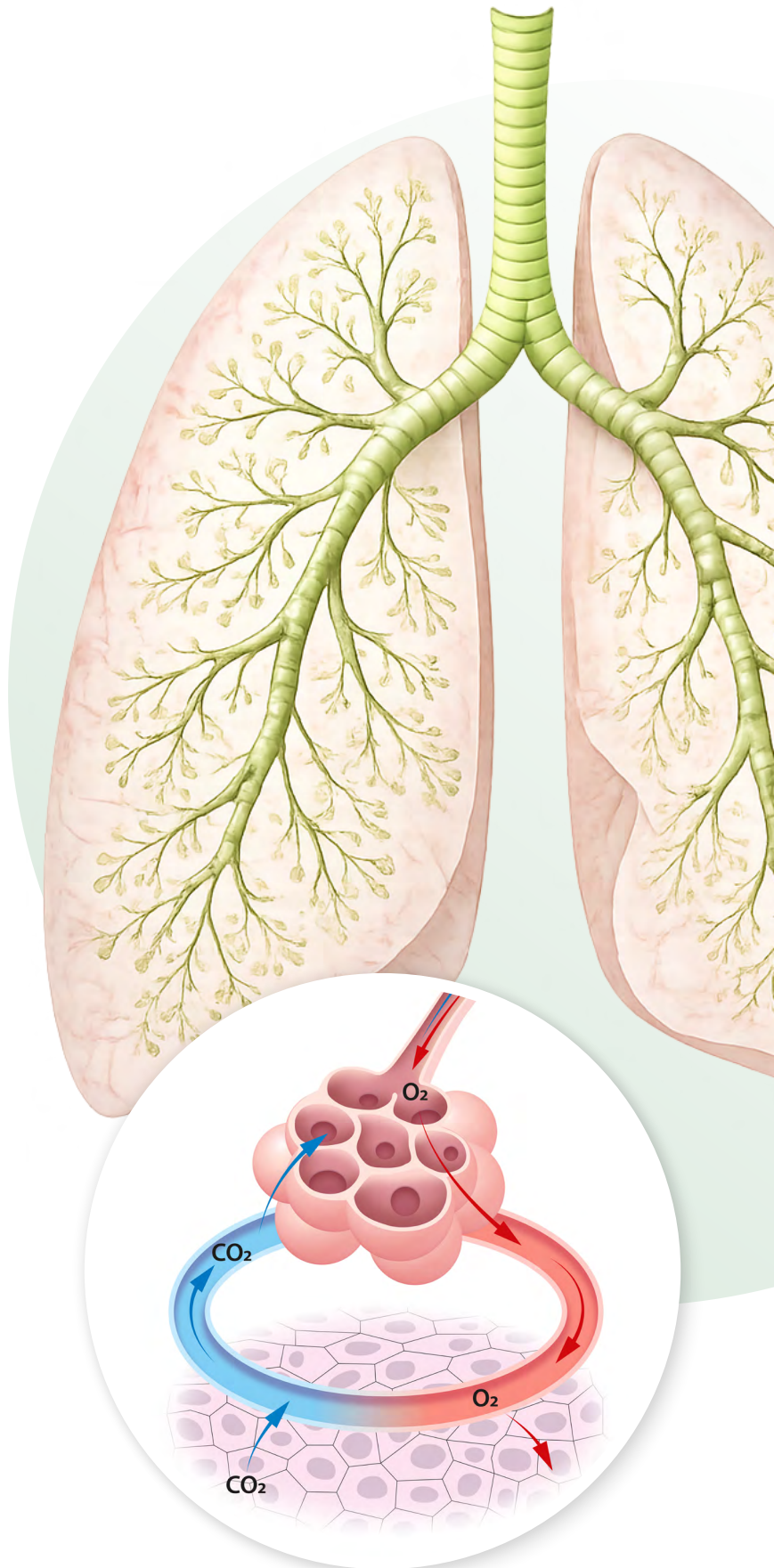
AIR REACHES THE AIR SACS

Air flows into the alveoli - tiny air sacs at the end of the tubes.

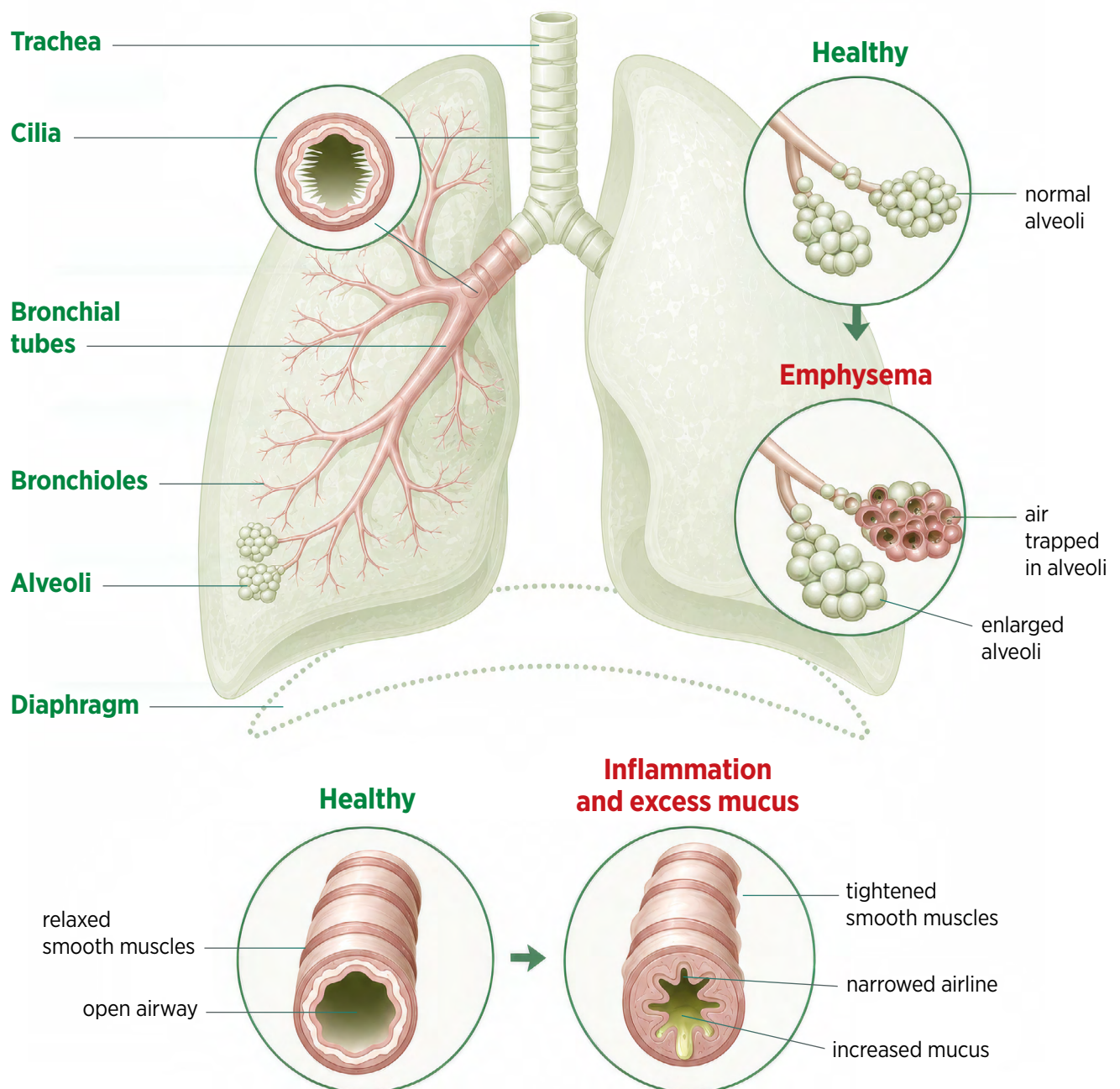
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OXYGEN IN, CARBON DIOXIDE OUT

Oxygen moves from the air sacs into your blood. Carbon dioxide moves from your blood into the air sacs to be breathed out.



Parts of the **RESPIRATORY SYSTEM**



Symptoms of COPD

COPD symptoms can vary from person to person and may change from day to day. Some symptoms may feel mild at times, while others can become more noticeable or difficult to manage.

Common signs and symptoms of COPD may include:



Shortness of breath, especially with activity



Coughing with or without mucus



Chest pain or tightness



Wheezing



Now that we have a better understanding of COPD, let's take a closer look at the lung conditions commonly associated with the disease.

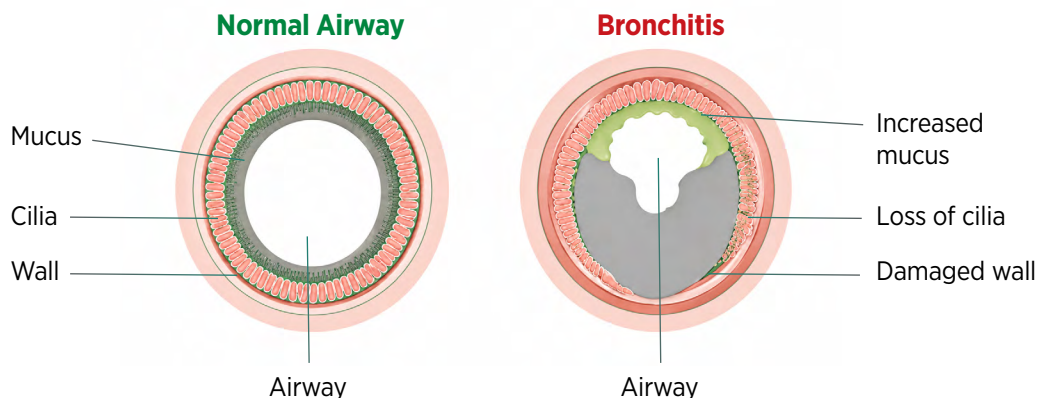
CHRONIC BRONCHITIS

Chronic bronchitis happens when the bronchial tubes become inflamed and irritated over time. Smoking and other irritants can damage the cilia, making it harder for the lungs to clear mucus. As mucus builds up in the airways, it can lead to an ongoing “productive cough” and make breathing more difficult.

EMPHYSEMA

Emphysema occurs when the tiny air sacs in the lungs, called alveoli, become damaged. As the walls between the air sacs break down, the sacs become larger and less effective at moving oxygen into the body. Damaged alveoli can trap air in the lungs, making it difficult to fully breathe out. This may lead to shortness of breath, fatigue, and reduced oxygen levels in the body.

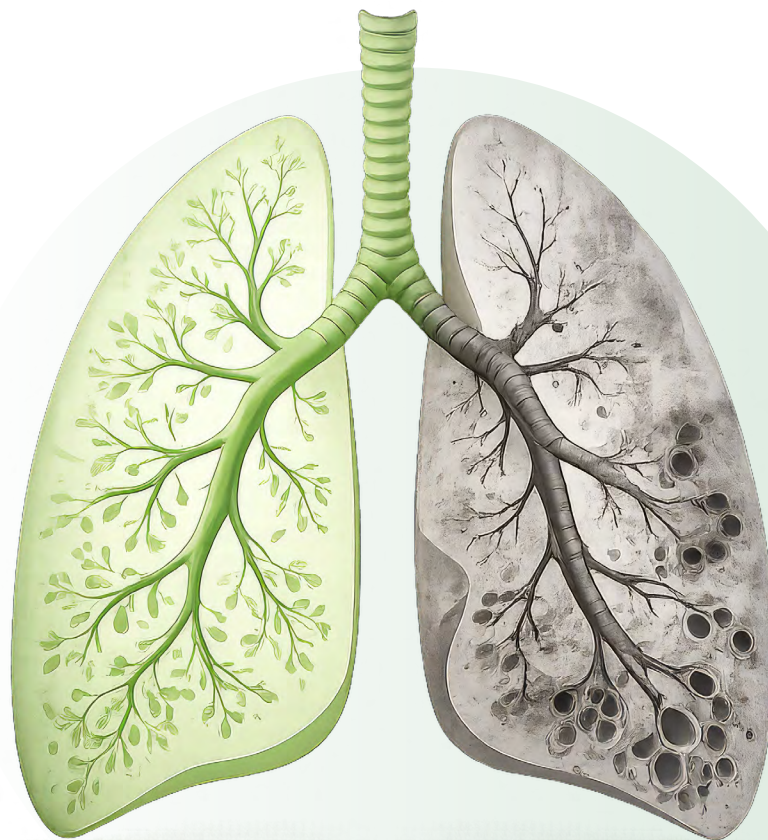
What's happening in the airways?



What Causes COPD?

COPD can develop from long-term exposure to irritants that damage the lungs and airways.

Common causes include cigarette smoking, secondhand smoke, air pollution, and breathing in dust, fumes, or chemicals at home or in the workplace. In some cases, COPD may also be linked to a genetic condition called alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency.



SMOKING

Smoking is the **leading cause** of COPD

Smoking **damages** the airways and lung tissue

Smoke causes **irritation** and **inflammation** in the lungs

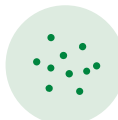
OTHER CAUSES



Secondhand smoke



Fumes and Chemicals



Dust



Genetic factors (alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency)



Pollution



BENEFITS OF QUITTING SMOKING

If you're a smoker, try to quit. Benefits of quitting may include:



Decreased risk of heart disease, lung disease and cancer



Less shortness of breath and coughing



More energy



Better liver function



Better digestion

To Stop Smoking

MAKE A PLAN

1

Choose a quit date. What day would you like to begin your smoke-free journey?

2

Clear cigarettes and smoking products from your home, car, and other spaces. Where else are you regularly exposed to smoke?

3

Talk with your health care provider about options that may help reduce cravings, such as nicotine replacement products or medications. Which support tools might work best for you?

4

Focus on healthy habits like movement, nutrition, and staying active. What are a few wellness goals you would like to work toward?

5

Celebrate your progress along the way. How could you use the money saved from not purchasing cigarettes?

6

Reach out for encouragement and support through hotlines, local programs, or support groups. What resources are available to help you stay motivated?

Other Causes of COPD

While smoking is the leading cause of COPD, other factors can also damage your lungs over time. Avoiding harmful irritants and knowing your risk can help protect your lung health and keep symptoms from getting worse.

If you are exposed to dust, fumes, or chemicals—at work or at home—over many years, this may lead to COPD. An N-95 respirator, when fitted and worn correctly, can filter out 95% of airborne particles and provide added protection.

Common Irritants to Avoid



AIR POLLUTION

Limit outdoor activity on high ozone days. Keep windows closed and use air conditioning when available.



AEROSOLS

Choose pump sprays, solid deodorants, and fragrance products instead of aerosol sprays.



CLEANERS / BUG SPRAYS

Opt for natural or unscented cleaning products. Use an N-95 respirator when needed.



DUST

Change furnace filters regularly. Ask for help with household cleaning when possible.



BACTERIA, MOLD & MILDEW

Replace sponges often, watch for visible mold, and keep humidity in check using a humidity meter or dehumidifier.



OPEN FIRES

Avoid smoke from fires. Keep windows closed if neighbors are burning leaves, wood, or other materials.

Early Life Exposures

Exposure to harmful chemicals, air pollution, or respiratory infections during childhood can affect lung development and may increase the risk of COPD later in life.

Childhood asthma is also linked to COPD in adulthood.

A Genetic Link

COPD can be caused by a genetic condition called alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency (Alpha-1). People with Alpha-1 have lower levels of a protein that protects the lungs from damage caused by irritants.

A simple blood test can determine if you have Alpha-1. Treatment is available and can slow the progression of COPD.

For more information, visit the Alpha-1 Foundation at www.alpha1.org.

COPD and Other CONDITIONS (Comorbidities)

People with COPD often manage other long-term health conditions at the same time. These comorbid conditions are more common in individuals with COPD.

Examples of conditions you may experience include:

Arthritis

Diabetes

Depression

Sleep Apnea

Obesity

Osteoporosis

GERD

High Cholesterol

High Blood Pressure

Heart Disease



It's not always clear why people with COPD are more likely to have other serious health problems. One factor may be the medications used to treat COPD. Like all medications, COPD treatments can cause side effects and carry risks - especially corticosteroids.

Other **LUNG** **DISORDERS**

Other chronic lung disorders share some similarities with COPD. Many have similar signs, symptoms, and triggers (things that cause flare-ups), while others are different.

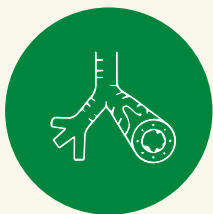
What they all have in common is that they can make it harder to breathe. The conditions below are some of the lung disorders.



ASTHMA

Asthma causes the airways to become inflamed and narrowed, which can make breathing difficult. Common symptoms include coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath.

Symptoms may come and go or occur more frequently depending on the severity of the condition. Treatment often includes medications, avoiding triggers, and monitoring symptoms to help prevent flare-ups.



BRONCHIECTASIS

Bronchiectasis occurs when the airways become widened, scarred, and inflamed. Mucus can build up in the lungs, increasing the risk of infection and ongoing coughing.

Common symptoms include shortness of breath, fatigue, chest discomfort, and frequent mucus production. Treatment may include airway clearance therapy, medications, oxygen therapy, and pulmonary rehabilitation.

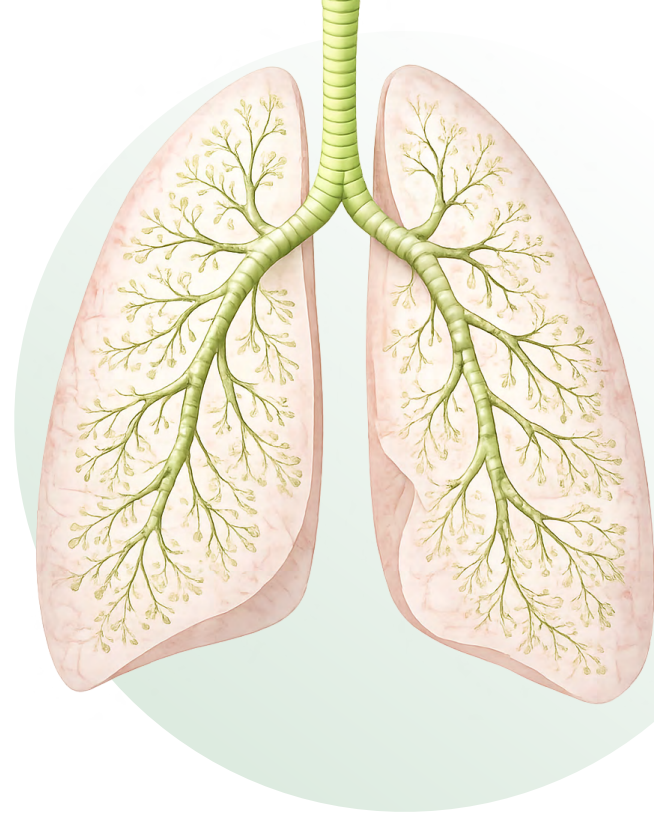


NONTUBERCULOUS MYCOBACTERIAL (NTM) LUNG DISEASE

NTM lung disease is a chronic lung infection caused by bacteria commonly found in soil and water. People with lung conditions such as COPD, asthma, or bronchiectasis may be at greater risk.

Symptoms may include chronic cough, fatigue, fever, shortness of breath, and weight loss. Treatment options can include antibiotics, airway clearance therapy, oxygen therapy, and reducing exposure to environmental irritants.

How Do We **TREAT COPD?**



There is no cure for COPD at this time, but it can be managed. With the right care and support, you can breathe easier, do more of what you enjoy, and live a full and active life.

Treatment focuses on relieving symptoms, improving your quality of life, and preventing flare-ups and complications.

COPD Treatment May Include:



Inhaled Medications

Medicines you breathe in through an inhaler can help open airways, reduce inflammation, and relieve symptoms.



Oral Medications

Medicines taken by mouth can help reduce symptoms, treat infections, and manage other related conditions.



Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programs

These supervised programs include exercise, education, and support to help you feel stronger and more in control.



Oxygen Programs

If your oxygen levels are low, oxygen therapy can help you breathe easier and have more energy.



Partner in Your Care

Work closely with your health care provider. Talk about your COPD and any other health issues you may have so you can build a plan that's right for you.



You don't have to manage COPD alone.

With the right treatment plan and support team, you can have fewer symptoms and enjoy a better quality of life.

RESOURCES

These trusted resources provide helpful information to support you in understanding and managing your COPD so you can live your best life.



For information designed to help you manage your COPD and thrive with this condition please visit The COPD Foundation Guides for Better Living at copdf.co/guides



Learn more about COPD on the COPD Foundation's Website at www.COPDFoundation.org



For more information on bronchiectasis and NTM lung disease, visit the Bronchiectasis and NTM Initiative website at copdf.co/bronchntm