



Making Moments Like this Possible – Living with COPD

Although there is currently no “cure” for COPD, there are things that you can do to manage the symptoms of the disease while living a full and active life.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a disease that effects the functioning of the lungs, and includes several different ailments, such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. The first sign that you may be suffering from the disease is shortness of breath, at first under exertion, followed by the feeling occurring when at rest.

Other symptoms include:

- Productive cough
- Tightness of the chest
- Wheezing or rattling sound when breathing
- Extreme tiredness after light, physical activity.

The majority of those who suffer from COPD smoke, or have smoked at some time in their lives. If you smoke, quit – now! There are many new ways to curb your dependency on nicotine. Ask your doctor for suggestions and guidance.

Treatment Options

Unfortunately, there is currently is no cure for COPD, but there are things that you can do to manage it. The proper use of medication, pulmonary therapy and in certain instances, surgery are all options that may be prescribed by your physician. The goal of any treatment is to improve symptoms and slow the progression of the disease.

Medication – Typically, bronchodilators and corticosteroids are used to open your airways, making it easier to breathe. However, given that most of these medications are delivered via an inhaler, it is imperative that they be used properly.

Pulmonary Rehabilitation – In order to remain active and carry out your daily activities, it may be necessary for you to undergo pulmonary rehabilitation. This is a medically supervised program that includes disease management instruction, along with physical and nutritional components.

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Oxygen Therapy – Because your lungs provide oxygen to the rest of your body, when they are not functioning properly you may need to use supplemental oxygen. This therapy option can be used as often as is necessary to allow normal activity and protect major organs.
Managing Complications

Given that symptoms develop slowly and worsen over time, it is easy for patients to become complacent about their treatment. It is absolutely imperative to be constantly diligent to prevent and protect against colds and the flu, which can cause your symptoms to suddenly worsen.

Be sure to get your flu and pneumonia vaccine each year. If any of your symptoms seem to worsen or you develop a fever, be sure to contact your physician immediately.

Introducing Covenant Home Care's COPD Program

Covenant Home Care is now offering a COPD program, designed to:

- Help you take your medications correctly
- Eat well
- Exercise and stay active
- Use oxygen safely
- Prevent COPD symptoms from worsening
- Monitor your symptoms and be on the lookout for complications.

Working with your physician, we become part of the care team that you can rely on to manage your COPD. Our nurses will visit your home, but will also use our unique Tele-Health system to monitor your symptoms on a consistent basis. Using this method allows for accurate tracking of oxygen levels, temperature and medication compliance. If we notice a change – any change – we'll be able to act quickly by contacting you and your physician in order to respond to any health issues quickly and appropriately.

To learn more about Covenant Home Care's COPD Program, log on to www.covenanthc.org/COPD or call us at 1-800-726-8761.



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