

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

## COPD

is a group of illnesses like asthma or bronchitis that block airflow causing serious breathing problems.

**16 million**  
US Adults are living  
with COPD

### Symptoms Include:

- Chronic cough
- Smoker's cough
- Chronic phlegm production
- Shortness of breath while doing things you used to be able to do
- Not being able to breathe deeply
- Wheezing

### Causes & Risk Factors

*Smoking Tobacco is the #1 cause of COPD in the United States.*

Long-term exposure to second-hand smoke and other air pollutants has been linked to COPD.

### Preventing COPD & Treatment

- To prevent COPD, **DON'T START SMOKING**. If you smoke, **quitting or cutting down on the number of cigarettes** each day is important to improve breathing & ability to do regular activities.
- To manage the symptoms caused by COPD, options to improve quality of life include: medications, inhalers, physical activity training, & oxygen treatment.
- There is no cure for COPD. Screening & early detection are essential.

### Talking about COPD

*While it is important to find a balance in how often to bring up smoking behaviors, it is important to keep the conversation ongoing. **Keep in mind...***



People living with COPD may manage strong emotions along with the physical illness. Depression and anxiety can be barriers to seeking and maintaining treatment routines.



There may be feelings of shame about COPD & smoking. It is important to engage in ways that don't bring out the same and invites them into the change process.



Supporting people with COPD to cut back or quit smoking is key to improving wellness. Engaging people about smoking can be tough. Here are some ways to help keep the regular conversation fresh.

# The 5 A's: A Brief Tobacco Intervention

It can feel uncomfortable asking questions about smoking.

Try asking more exploratory questions instead of focusing on the how/why/when of quitting.

## Ask permission to ask questions!

Let others know you will ask multiple times & in different ways so you can learn more about their use, how it changes over time & how you can support cutting back or quitting.

## ASK

"If you were to quit smoking, what do you think it would be like when you don't smoke anymore?"

- How much are you currently smoking?
- How old were you when you started?
- How has your smoking changed over time?
- What do you like about it?
- Have you ever cut down or quit smoking?
- Are the times you tend to smoke more? Less?

## ADVISE

Encourage all tobacco users to quit or cut back.

*"Reducing or ideally quitting smoking is a really important thing you can do to improve your health, it protects those around you, and we can help."*

## ASSESS

Check readiness to quit by asking:

*"Is quitting or cutting down something you want to do..."*

- Now     Soon (in the next month)     Some Day (not right now but thinking about it a few times a week)     Not thinking about it

## ASSIST

**If Ready to Quit:** Provide brief counseling & refer to other supports like quitlines, group counseling or to a nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) prescriber.

**If NOT Ready to Quit:** Provide frequent, motivational & supportive messages to remind individuals that quitting is hard but important and that there are always supports available.

## ARRANGE

**Coordinate referrals** and have regular follow-up conversations about cutting back or quitting.

