

### How can I find out more?

You'll feel more in control the more you know about COPD.

- Go to [www.physiotherapy.org.nz](http://www.physiotherapy.org.nz) and type 'COPD' in the search box.

Here are some very good resources written by experts:

- Breathe Easier with COPD* by the Asthma Foundation: [www.asthmafoundation.org.nz](http://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz)
- Better Living with COPD – A Patient Guide* by the Australian Lung Foundation: [www.lungfoundation.com.au/lung-information/patient-educational-material/better-living-with-copd-a-patient-guide](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au/lung-information/patient-educational-material/better-living-with-copd-a-patient-guide)

### How can I find a physio?

- Go to your local physio, or
- Go to [www.physiotherapy.org.nz](http://www.physiotherapy.org.nz) and click on 'find a physio', or
- Ask your doctor to recommend a physio.

Check that your physio is a member of Physiotherapy New Zealand. This shows they're committed to high standards of professional practice.



[www.physiotherapy.org.nz](http://www.physiotherapy.org.nz)



*Physiotherapy New Zealand acknowledges the Cardiothoracic Special Interest Group and Quitline for providing information for this leaflet.*

*This leaflet does not replace the benefits of a full assessment and programme provided by an expert physio.*

#### Physiotherapy New Zealand

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#### Quitline

PO Box 12 605  
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Fax: +64 4 470 7632  
[www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz)

## ARE YOU BREATHLESS? HAVE YOU EVER SMOKED?

If so, you may have the lung disease COPD.

Call on a physio to help you...

- stay active and independent
- breathe more comfortably
- control coughing



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Quitline  
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## Are you breathless? Have you ever smoked?

If so, you may have COPD\*. That's the name for a group of lung diseases including chronic bronchitis and emphysema. They are mostly caused by long-term smoking. If you have COPD, you may have some or all of these symptoms:

- Coughing every day over a long period of time
- Coughing up mucus
- Wheezing (your breath 'whistles' when you breathe in and out)
- Feeling more breathless than usual when you're physically active
- Frequent colds or flu

*\*Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*

Your symptoms may not seem serious at first. Over time, though, you may get very short of breath doing daily activities such as walking, getting dressed and eating.

## How can I check whether I have COPD?

It's important to go to your doctor to find out if you have COPD: The symptoms are similar to asthma but the treatment is very different. Your doctor will do some simple tests. If the tests show that you have COPD, your doctor can get you started on treatment.

## What treatment is available for COPD?

COPD can't be cured but there's a lot you can do to improve your symptoms and have a much better life.

### Join a class for people with COPD

Ask your doctor to refer you for pulmonary rehab classes in your area. These classes are specially designed to improve your ability to manage everyday activities. Research shows that people who attend the classes become more independent and have a better quality of life.

A team of health professionals run the classes. You'll meet others who also have COPD and you'll have fun as well as learning a lot. Over a six-week period you'll learn about:

- Managing your lung disease
- Exercise
- Quitting smoking
- Nutrition

### See a physio

If there isn't a class available in your area, ask your doctor to refer you to a local physio who is skilled in treating people with COPD. Your physio will discuss your needs with you and help put together an activity plan just for you.

## Stop smoking

Being smoke-free is very important if you have COPD. You'll find excellent support to quit smoking at [www.quit.org.nz](http://www.quit.org.nz) or you can call Quitline free on 0800 778 778.

## Take the medication your doctor prescribes for you

You can manage your symptoms better by using the drugs that are available for people with COPD. You should also get vaccinated against 'flu each year before winter comes around. Ask your doctor for more information.

## Take regular exercise

You'll benefit from exercising regularly because it keeps your heart and breathing muscles in shape. If you keep as fit as you can, you'll be able to live independently for longer. You're also less likely to end up in hospital because of your COPD.

Choose an activity you enjoy. Even a small amount of physical activity is better than none at all. Many people with COPD find that walking is helpful. Start by walking as far as you can without becoming too breathless or distressed, then slowly build up to walking further for longer. You'll soon notice the benefits if you make walking part of your daily routine.

