



# Fresh Air News

A Special Newsletter for MVP Members

# Learning to Breathe Easier

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe. COPD gets worse over time. You can't undo the damage to your lungs. But you can take steps to breathe easier and feel better.

- If you have severe COPD, you may find that you take quick, small, shallow breaths.
- It's important to avoid shortness of breath. Do all you can to make breathing easier. This includes learning ways of breathing that can help the air flow in and out of your lungs.
- Breath training can help you take deeper breaths and reduce shortness of breath.
- You must practice breath training regularly to do it well.



## How do you use these breathing methods?

Use these methods when you are more short of breath than normal. Practice them often so you can do them well.

### Pursed-lip Breathing

Pursed-lip breathing helps you breathe more air out so that your next breath can be deeper. It makes you less short of breath and lets you exercise more.

- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth while almost closing your lips.
- Breathe in for about two seconds, and breathe out for four to six seconds.

### Breathing With Your Diaphragm

Breathing with your diaphragm helps your lungs expand so that they take in more air. Your diaphragm is the large muscle that separates your lungs from your belly.

- Lie on your back, or prop yourself up on several pillows.
- Put one hand on your belly and the other on your chest. When you breathe in, push your belly out as far as possible. You should feel the hand on your belly move out, while the hand on your chest does not move.
- When you breathe out, you should feel the hand on your belly move in. When you can do this type of breathing well while lying down, learn to do it while sitting or standing. Many people with COPD find this breathing method helpful.
- Practice this breathing method for 20 minutes at a time, two or three times a day.

### Breathing While Bending Forward at the Waist

Breathing while bending forward can reduce shortness of breath while you are exercising or resting. You can sit or stand to use this breathing method.

To use this breathing method, bend forward slightly at the waist. Keep your back straight. If you are standing, you may want to rest your hands on the edge of a table or the back of a chair.

Bending forward like this may make it easier for you to breathe. It helps your diaphragm move more easily.

## Avoiding Your Triggers

You can do things at home to manage COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease). By learning the triggers for COPD and avoiding them, you can help reduce flare-ups. While some triggers may be out of your control, there are others you can easily avoid.

- Learn and avoid the common triggers for COPD.
- By avoiding flare-ups, you may feel better, be more active, and reduce the impact of COPD on your life.
- Pay attention to symptoms that may warn you of a flare-up. You may need to see your doctor or go to the hospital if your symptoms are severe.

### Avoid Triggers in the Air

- Quit smoking. This is the most important thing you can do. Also stay away from other people who are smoking.
- Use an air conditioner or air filter in your home.
- Cook near an open door or window, or turn on your kitchen fan.
- If there is a lot of pollution or dust outside, stay at home and keep your windows closed.

### Protect Your Health

- Get a flu vaccine every year.
- Talk to your doctor about getting a pneumococcal shot.
- Wash your hands to avoid infections.
- Eat healthy foods, exercise, and get enough rest.
- Refill your medicines before you run out.
- Take extra medicines with you when you travel.



**MVP has online resources available to help you take charge of your health.**

Make informed decisions about your health by using the Healthwise® Knowledgebase—our online Health Encyclopedia. Curious about the medications you take every day? Visit **[mvphealthcare.com](http://mvphealthcare.com)** and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*. The MVP Healthwise Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information.



### Contact Us

For more information, call **1-866-942-7966**

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm.  
TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

### We value your opinion.

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at **[mvplistsens.com](http://mvplistsens.com)**. We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100 percent confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management, and Prevention of COPD, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD). This program must be coordinated with your physician.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

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## Quick Tips for Being Prepared to Talk to Your Doctor

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered.
- Bring a “health history” list with you, and keep it up to date.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at [mvphealthcare.com](http://mvphealthcare.com).

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)



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