

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Cobequid Community Health Centre

Respiratory Services

Cobequid Community Health Centre
Room 2306
40 Freer Lane
Lower Sackville, NS
B4C 0A2

- › Phone: 902-869-6140
- › Fax: 902-865-6073

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

What is COPD?

- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a progressive (gets worse over time) lung disorder. It can be:
 - › Chronic (ongoing) bronchitis
 - › Emphysema
 - › A combination of both
- **Chronic bronchitis** is inflammation (irritation, redness, and swelling) of the airways in the lungs.
 - › This causes them to become swollen with thick, sticky mucus.
 - › The mucus can block the airways and may keep the lungs from emptying fully when you breathe.
- **Emphysema** is damage to the alveoli (small air sacs in the lungs). This stops the lungs from emptying fully. It can also make it hard to get oxygen into your body.

Who is at risk of developing COPD?

- You are most at risk if you:
 - › Are 40 years old or older
 - › Smoke or used to smoke
- Cigarette smoke can damage your lungs. It is the leading cause of COPD.
- Not all people who smoke (or who have smoked in the past) notice problems with their breathing right away. It usually takes years to develop symptoms of COPD.

Symptoms of COPD include:

- › Coughing up sputum (mucus) on most days
- › Frequent chest or lung infections
- › Wheezing
- › Shortness of breath or trouble breathing when exercising or doing daily activities

How is COPD diagnosed?

- Your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) will ask about your medical history and do a physical exam.
- You will also have a simple breathing test called **spirometry**. Your primary health care provider or respirologist (doctor who specializes in lung disease) can order a spirometry test.

How is COPD managed?

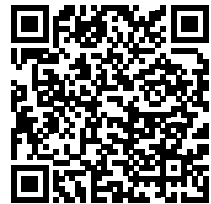
Managing COPD can include:

- **Stopping smoking**

For more information, visit:

- › <https://mha.nshealth.ca/en/topics/substance-use-and-gambling/nicotine-tobacco>

Scan the QR code on your device (open the camera on your device, point the camera at the code, and tap the banner or border that appears)



- **Medications**

These may include an inhaler (device used to breathe in medication) and/or oral (taken by mouth) medication(s).

- **Vaccinations**

These may include a yearly flu vaccine and a pneumococcal (pneumonia) vaccine.

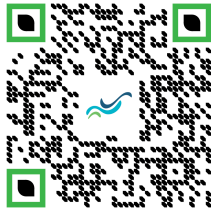
- **Physical activity** (strength, cardio, and chair exercises)

- **Pulmonary (lung) rehabilitation exercises**

Pulmonary rehabilitation is available at the Cobequid Community Health Centre.

For more information:

- › Phone: 902-869-6140
- › <https://library.nshealth.ca/Pulmonary-Rehab>



COPD education

- Goals of COPD education include:
 - › Preventing your disease from getting worse
 - › Preventing or relieving shortness of breath
 - › Improving your ability to exercise
 - › Lowering the number of flare-ups
 - › Improving quality of life
 - › Lowering the amount of time spent in the hospital

To get started:

- Ask your primary health care provider to fill out a referral form and mail (see address on front cover) or fax it to Respiratory Services:
 - › Fax: 902-865-6073
 - › We will call you with an appointment time.
- You can also call Respiratory Services and make an appointment yourself.
 - › Phone: 902-869-6140
- For more information about COPD education, call the Respiratory Educator:
 - › Phone: 902-869-6140

To learn more about COPD, visit:

- › www.livingwellwithCOPD.com

Notes:

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find all patient education resources here:
www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Prepared by: Respiratory Services,
Cobequid Community Health Centre
Designed and Managed by: Library Services

CB85-1233 © September 2026 Nova Scotia Health Authority
To be reviewed September 2029 or sooner, if needed.
Learn more:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources>