

COPD* and Asthma

How are COPD and asthma different?

| | COPD | Asthma |
|--|---|---|
| When does it start? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Over the age of 40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">At any age; often when you are a child |
| How does smoking affect it? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Most people who get COPD smoked more than a pack a day for 20 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Both smokers and nonsmokers can get asthma |
| What causes it? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">SmokingSecondhand smokeHaving low weight and a virus at birthHaving had severe respiratory infections as a child | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Being sensitive to foods or pollen in the air that cause an allergic reactionHaving a family history of asthma |
| What are some of symptoms? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Trouble breathing during activities or at restCough that brings up mucus | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Chest tightnessCoughShortness of breathWheezing |
| How does treatment for it affect your airways? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">May be able to partly open your airways | <ul style="list-style-type: none">May be able to open your airways to a large degree |

Asthma affects the airways, but it is not the same disease. Some people with COPD have asthma, too. If you have both COPD and asthma, you may need different treatments for each one.

*Chronic (kron-ick) obstructive (ob-struck-tiv) pulmonary (pul-muh-nair-ee) disease, including chronic bronchitis (bronk-eye-tis), emphysema (em-fuh-zee-muh), or both.

Did you know?

COPD is a long-lasting disease that often gets worse over time. Asthma attacks come and go—you may have no symptoms between attacks.

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