



Tobacco and COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a disease of the lungs. A person with COPD has trouble breathing. This is because the airways or tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs are damaged. Smoking is the main cause for COPD. People exposed to secondhand smoke are also at risk for COPD. The two main types of COPD are chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Chronic Bronchitis

- Airways become inflamed and clogged with mucus.
- Causes coughing and difficulty breathing.
- Quitting smoking will prevent chronic bronchitis from getting worse.

Emphysema

- Tiny air sacs in the lungs are destroyed and can result in permanent “holes” in the lung tissue.
- Breathing becomes difficult over time as lungs lose their flexibility.

Impact of Tobacco Use on the Lungs

- Cigarette smoking accounts for almost all cases of COPD.
- Carbon monoxide found in cigarettes prevents oxygen from getting to the body easily.
- Smoking can destroy tiny hairs in the lungs that keep them clean and protected from infection.

Smokers vs. Nonsmokers

- The risk of death due to COPD increases with the number of cigarettes smoked.
- Smokers have an increased risk of respiratory problems such as wheezing and coughing.

It is never too late to stop smoking. At any stage of COPD, quitting smoking will lessen your symptoms and slow COPD progression.



“ Quitting smoking with those that live with you has the benefit of support when you need it and it reduces the temptation of restarting. **”** It's a win-win for all involved!

— Pulmonologist Dustin Engelken, MD Alaska Native Medical Center

Tips to Help You Quit

Why Should I Quit?

- 71% of adults in Alaska would like to quit tobacco.
- 93% of Alaska Native adults agree that every cigarette causes a smoker damage.
- The risk for heart disease is cut in half one year after quitting tobacco.
- In five years after quitting tobacco your risk for cancer of the mouth, throat and esophagus are cut in half.
- In ten years after quitting, your risk for developing lung cancer drops by 50%.

How Do I Quit?

- Call Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line! The Quit Line is **FREE** for all Alaskans and is available by calling 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) seven days a week, from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m. Quit Line services include phone counseling sessions and up to eight weeks of free nicotine replacement therapy, including the patch, gum or lozenge.
- Obtain support from friends and family. Ask Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line to send you the "Ally Guide."
- Contact your clinic to find out what tobacco resources are available in your area.
- Keep trying to quit! Most tobacco users make several quit attempts before staying quit for good.

// *It's very exciting to me that your program is really there to support me, that everything a person needs is right there if they're ready to use it. I didn't expect it and the program really came through and sent the patches. It helps so much to have the support and know that someone cares if I live or die.* **//**

— Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line Caller

