

Supporting People With Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

The INSPIRED COPD Outreach Program™
and
COPD Care and Education Nova Scotia

Supporting People With COPD

What is COPD?

- COPD stands for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.
- COPD is a lung disorder that includes chronic (ongoing) symptoms of:
 - › Shortness of breath
 - › Coughing
 - › Sputum (mucus)

You may have episodes when your symptoms get worse. These are called **exacerbations**.

- Symptoms of COPD are caused by changes in your airways (chronic bronchitis) or in your air sacs (emphysema). These changes obstruct (block) the flow of air when you breathe.
- COPD symptoms usually get worse over time.

Who is at risk of getting COPD?

- You are most at risk of getting COPD if you:
 - › Smoke or used to smoke
 - › Were exposed to second-hand smoke

What are the symptoms of COPD?

- › Coughing up mucus most days
- › Having chest or lung infections often
- › Wheezing or noisy breathing
- › Trouble breathing when exercising or doing daily activities

How is COPD diagnosed?

- Talk to your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) about your symptoms. They will:
 - › Ask about your medical history
 - › Order a breathing test called **spirometry**: this test measures how air moves out of your lungs. It will show if the air flow in your lungs is obstructed (blocked). The test may be at a hospital or a community clinic.
- Spirometry is 1 part of a series of breathing tests called Pulmonary Function Tests (PFTs). Most people only need spirometry to find out if they have COPD.

What will happen after I am diagnosed with COPD?

- Your primary health care provider will:
 - › Review your test results with you
 - › Help you get the right care
- Education and resources are available through The INSPIRED COPD Outreach Program™ and COPD Care and Education Nova Scotia.
- These programs help you learn how to self-manage your COPD. This is done through:
 - › Telehealth (virtual care offered at your local hospital)
 - › Virtual (online) care
 - › Group education
 - › Home visits

One of our educators will help you find the program that is right for you.

How can I manage COPD?

- Learning how to self-manage COPD can help you cope with the disease. This may include:
 - › Medication review and teaching
 - › How to use a COPD action plan
 - › Help managing your symptoms
 - › Smoking or nicotine cessation (stopping) support
 - › Supports to help you cope (like counselling, advocacy)
 - › Choosing your goals of care
 - › Making a Personal Directive
 - › Choosing healthy behaviours
 - › How to access related services
 - › A phone number you can call if you have questions
 - › Assessment and follow-up by health care providers

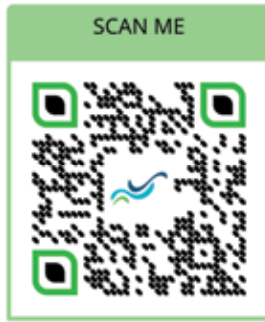
What are the benefits of COPD education?

- › More confidence managing your symptoms
- › Less anxiety and stress
- › Less risk of breathing emergencies needing medical attention

For more information, visit:

- › www.nshealth.ca/clinics-programs-and-services/copd-inspired-copd-outreach-program

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



The INSPIRED COPD Outreach Program™
and

COPD Care and Education Nova Scotia

- › Phone: 902-717-7596
- › Fax: 902-425-4191
- › Email: INSPIRED@nshealth.ca

“I used to feel so alone with my illness; now people check on me and I know there’s someone I can call if I’m having a problem. I would feel so much more isolated, frustrated, and apprehensive without this support.”

-INSPIRED patient



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 this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

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

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