

# COPD Program

Being short of breath is not a normal sign of aging.

Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner if you are short of breath when doing everyday tasks like walking up the stairs. You may have COPD or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

While COPD can't be cured, it can be treated. Early diagnosis, lifestyle changes and appropriate drug treatments can help you lead a normal and active life.

## What is COPD?

COPD is a lung disease that includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. In both cases, the lungs are obstructed or blocked, making it difficult to breathe.

Usually diagnosed in people over 40 years of age, COPD develops over time. A person with COPD may not be aware of the shortness of breath until it is so advanced that walking up the stairs is difficult.

Smokers and former smokers are at a greater risk of developing COPD but non-smokers can also develop COPD.

## How is COPD diagnosed?

To diagnosis COPD, your physician or nurse practitioner may first ask some questions:

- Do you currently smoke? Or did you smoke in the past?
- How often are you short of breath? What makes your shortness of breath worse?
- Do you cough? How long have you been coughing?
- Do you cough up sputum (phlegm, mucus)?
- Does anyone or did anyone in your family have lung disease?

You may also be referred for a spirometry test, which is the most reliable way to diagnose COPD. This simple breathing test measures the speed and amount of air you are able to blow out of your lungs.

At Trent Hills Family Health Team, we are able to perform a spirometry test at the Campbellford clinic.

## Treatment of COPD

We have developed a new COPD Management Program to

- provide early diagnosis and treatment
- provide health teaching on COPD medications
- ensure you are adequately vaccinated
- to teach you how exercise and nutrition can help you feel better
- To help prevent hospital admissions.

If you are a smoker, quitting is the best thing you can do to halt the damage. We have had a Smoking Cessation program at Trent Hills Family Health Team since 2012.

Both programs are available for all our patients.

## Where can I get more information?

Canadian Lung Association: [www.lung.ca](http://www.lung.ca)

Ontario Lung Association: [www.on.lung.ca](http://www.on.lung.ca)