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A Simple Guide To Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease, Diagnosis, Treatment And Related Conditions (A Simple Guide To Medical Conditions)

**A SIMPLE GUIDE TO
CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE
LUNG DISEASE,
Diagnosis, Treatment
And
Related Conditions
by**

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Synopsis

Chapter 1 Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease A Simple Guide to Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease

2007 What is Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease? Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (COLD) is a medical disorder of the lungs characterized by the obstruction to the air flow in the airways of the lungs. The narrowing of the airways together with distension of the air sacs beyond the terminal bronchioles with destruction of the alveolar walls over the course of many years damages the air sacs reducing the surface area left for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. As a result the patient become increasingly short of breath. There are two main forms of COLD: 1. Chronic bronchitis, which involves a long-term cough with mucus 2. Emphysema, which involves damage to the lungs over time. Most people with COLD have a combination of both conditions. What is the cause of Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease? Smoking is the main cause of COLD. The more a person smokes, the more likely that person will develop COLD. But some people smoke for years and never get COLD. Rarely, non-smokers who do not have a protein called alpha-1 antitrypsin can form emphysema. Other risk factors for COLD are: 1. Exposure to certain gases or fumes in the workplace 2. Exposure to heavy volumes of second-hand smoke and pollution. Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease is linked with other diseases: 1. Chronic bronchitis Chronic bronchitis is an ongoing inflammation of the lining of the breathing tubes (the bronchi), which is caused by bacterial infection or cigarette smoke irritation. As the inflammation progresses, the bronchi fill up with mucus resulting in a chronic cough, as the body attempts to rid itself of the excess mucus that is irritating the lungs. The excess mucus stuck in the bronchi also induces the diameter of the bronchi to be narrower and decreases the amount of air that can pass through. There is obstruction to air flow and hence breathlessness. 2. Chronic asthma Chronic asthma the narrowing of the air tubes caused by spasm of the muscles of the lining the air tubes triggered off by the allergens can cause permanent damage to the air tubes causing obstruction to airflow and hence difficulty in breathing. 3. Emphysema In Emphysema, there is the narrowing of the airway extends to the smaller airways or bronchioles with damage and over distension of the air sacs resulting in obstruction and less air getting through to the lungs. 4. Chronic infection Chronic Infection of the lungs like pneumoconiosis and tuberculosis may cause damage to the lungs with difficulty in breathing and poor air flow. In all cases of the above disorder air flow is impeded and there is hyper inflation of the lungs. What are the Symptoms of Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease? Because the symptoms form slowly, some people may not realize that they have COLD. Symptoms are: 1. Cough is normally the first symptom to develop. It is normally a wet cough with phlegm (sputum). Initially the cough is intermittent but becomes persistent as the condition progresses. 2. Excessive sputum or mucus is produced by the

damaged airways. This results in excessive production of phlegm³. Chronic shortness of breath or shortness of breath occurs with mild exertion. As the illness continues, breathlessness occurs even when sitting and can be very distressing to the patient.⁴ There may even be breathing difficulty when lying down.⁵ Wheezing may occur due to the air trying to squeeze through narrow airways.⁶ Bluish coloration of the skin due to lack of oxygen⁷. Dizziness can occur if the brain does not receive enough oxygen⁸. Fatigue also occurs when the body does not receive enough oxygen.

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