

7 COPD MYTHS

MYTH “Only people who smoke develop COPD”



FACT

Although smoking is the main cause of COPD, about one in four people with the disease have never smoked. In these cases, COPD is often linked to conditions affecting the lungs of children (including maternal smoking during pregnancy, premature birth, childhood infections), asthma, or a rare genetic condition called alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency.

MYTH “Physical activity is impossible with COPD”



FACT

Avoiding activity due to breathlessness can worsen COPD by reducing fitness and confidence. Regular, guided exercise with help from a healthcare professional can improve breathing and overall well-being.

MYTH “Only older people develop COPD”



FACT

Although COPD is more common in older adults, younger people can develop it, especially those with a genetic condition called alpha-1-antitrypsin deficiency. Recognizing early symptoms is key to getting timely diagnosis and slowing lung damage.

MYTH “It’s useless to quit smoking if you have COPD, because the damage is already done”



FACT

Quitting smoking at any stage brings major benefits, like slowing lung damage and improving breathing. Support from healthcare professionals can make quitting easier and more successful.



7 COPD MYTHS

MYTH “COPD can’t be treated”



FACT

While COPD-related lung damage can’t be reversed, the condition can be effectively managed with treatment. The most essential step in your treatment plan for COPD will be to quit smoking (if applicable to you). Inhalers, pulmonary rehabilitation, and other therapies can ease symptoms and improve quality of life.

MYTH “COPD is a man’s illness”



FACT

COPD now affects many women, sometimes more than men, possibly due to biological sensitivity or exposure to pollutants. Women with persistent breathing problems should seek medical evaluation.

MYTH “Since lung cancer has been ruled out, my long-term breathing problems aren’t something I need to worry about. I just have to live with them”



FACT

COPD is sometimes overlooked once lung cancer is ruled out, leading to missed early diagnoses. Getting chronic breathing issues checked thoroughly is vital for timely treatment and better outcomes.