

## FAST FACT

**More than 100,000 people in the U.S. die from emphysema annually, and many more die from a disease brought on by it, such as congestive heart failure.**

*Source: National Vital Statistics Report, 2001*

## How can I prevent Emphysema?

The easiest way to prevent emphysema is to quit smoking or refrain from starting in the first place. You should also avoid secondhand smoke as much as possible. Try to stay away from air pollution, workplace chemicals, dust and exhaust fumes as well. Stay inside in the afternoon when the air pollution levels are high.

***The easiest way to prevent emphysema is to quit smoking.***

Exercising and eating healthy meals can also help prevent the development of emphysema. If you have any lung problems or are experiencing any of the symptoms of emphysema, contact a doctor immediately. The earlier the diagnosis, the easier it will be to manage the disease.



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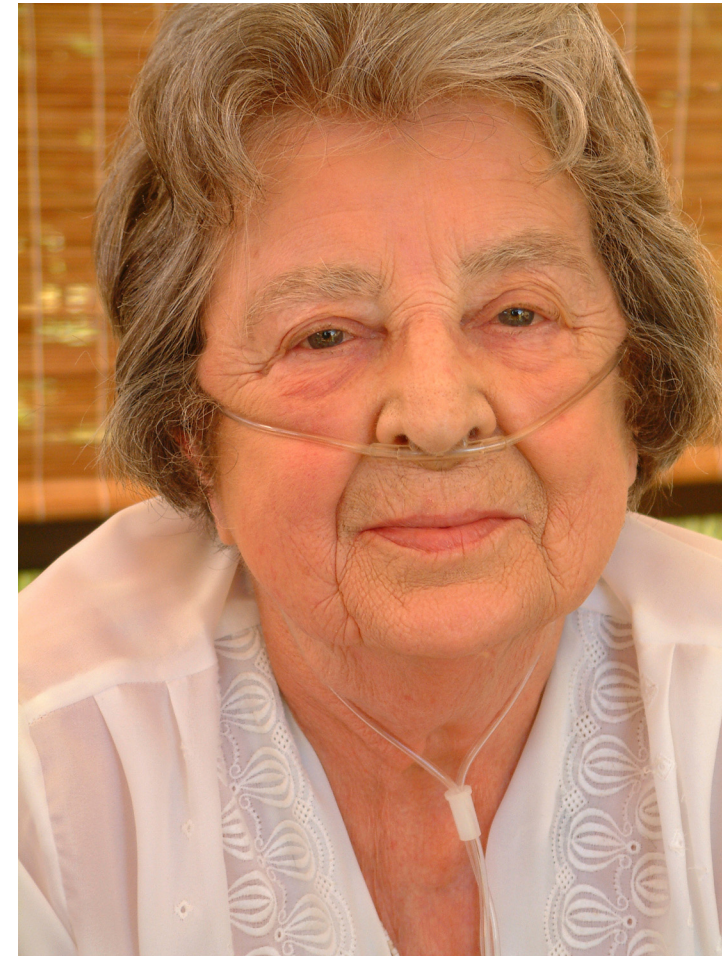
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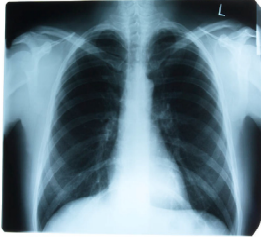
# Emphysema



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## What is Emphysema?

Emphysema is a serious disease that affects the lungs. While symptoms may appear rapidly and quickly become severe, the disease itself develops over a long period of time.



When a person is suffering from emphysema, the tiny air sacs (called alveoli) in the lungs are damaged and lose their ability to stretch. This allows air to become trapped in the lungs, making it difficult to exchange with new air. This makes it hard to breathe and can lead to a host of lung problems as well as death.

**Smoking is the main cause of emphysema and accounts for more than 80% of all cases.**

## What causes it?

**Smoking** is the main cause of emphysema and accounts for more than 80% of all cases. Emphysema may also be caused by exposure to irritants in the air such as air pollution, secondhand smoke, workplace chemicals, dust and exhaust fumes from automobiles and trucks. A person's health history may also have an impact on the development of the disease.

## How do I know if I have Emphysema?

If you think you have emphysema, make sure to talk to a doctor right away. Symptoms often do not appear or are not noticed at first, so many people do not know they have it until the later stages of the disease. At that point, they will often find themselves suffering from:

- \*Shortness of Breath
- \*Constant Tiredness
- \*Enlarged Chest
- \*Dry Cough

Some individuals with emphysema may also experience:

- \*Fever and Chills
- \*Unintentional Weight Loss
- \*Excessive Sweating

If you have any of these symptoms, make sure to see a doctor right away. Emphysema is a serious disease that can be fatal. However by detecting the disease early, a doctor may be able to help make the condition much more manageable.

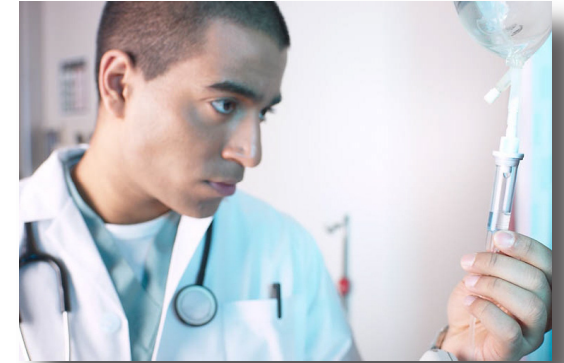
### FAST FACT

**Over 3 million Americans  
(2 out of every 1,000 residents)  
suffer from emphysema.**

*Source: Summary Health Statistics  
for U.S Adults: National Health  
Interview Survey, 2004*

## What kind of treatment is available?

Since the most common cause of emphysema is smoking, the most important thing you can do is to quit. Continuing to smoke can increase the severity of the disease. There are many products and programs to help you do this. Call Breathe California for local resources on quitting smoking.



There are also many medical treatments that can slow the progression of the disease. A doctor may prescribe medicines to open the airways or reduce inflammation. In addition, many healthcare providers offer special exercise programs and breathing classes which can help ease emphysema symptoms. These treatments work best for those who have been diagnosed, but are not in the late stages of the disease.

There are some options for people who are in the late stages of emphysema. Lung transplant or lung volume reduction surgery may be suggested for certain patients. The latter is a procedure where the most diseased parts of the lungs are removed to allow the healthy parts of the lungs to work better.