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A PROGRAM OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH

CLINICAL CHRONIC

Chronic Emphysema Bronchitis

COPD

Seeking the Signs and Symptoms of COPD

COPD is a lung disease that mainly affects breathing. It is caused by damage to the airways that carry air to and from the lungs. This damage can lead to chronic inflammation of the airways, which can cause narrowing or blockage of the airways. This can make it difficult to breathe, especially during physical activity. COPD can increase the risk of serious health problems, such as heart disease, stroke, and cancer.

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COPD: A Key to Understanding and Preventing?

COPD, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, is a long-term lung disease that affects how you breathe. It can make it hard to get the air you need to exercise and live a healthy life. COPD is caused by damage to the lungs from chronic inflammation and irritation, usually due to smoking.

Diagnosing COPD

If you have symptoms of COPD, such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath, it's important to see a doctor for a diagnosis. A common test used to diagnose COPD is spirometry, which measures how well you can breathe.

Spirometry

During a spirometry test, you will blow as hard and as fast as you can into a tube connected to a machine. The machine measures how much air you can breathe out and how fast you can breathe it out. This helps doctors determine if you have COPD and how severe it is.

Treating COPD

There is no cure for COPD, but there are treatments that can help manage symptoms and improve your quality of life. Some common treatments for COPD include:

- Smoking cessation
- Medications such as bronchodilators and inhaled steroids
- Oxygen therapy
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Surgery in some cases

Preventing COPD

The best way to prevent COPD is to never start smoking. If you smoke, quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to reduce your risk of COPD. Other ways to prevent COPD include:

- Exercising regularly
- Eating a healthy diet
- Avoiding secondhand smoke
- Staying away from pollutants
- Getting vaccinated

COPD is a serious disease that can have a big impact on your life. If you think you might have COPD, see a doctor for a diagnosis and to learn more about treatment options.