

## **Overall Key Messages from the *Speaking from Experience* Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) program.**

### **Breathlessness is not normal.**

If you are experiencing shortness of breath and/or a productive cough and you have a history of smoking, see your doctor about a lung function test.

### **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**

COPD is a chronic disease of the lungs that is also known as emphysema and chronic bronchitis. While the damage to your lungs can not be reversed, COPD is treatable. You can improve your symptoms, quality of life and stay out of hospital by taking the following important steps to manage your condition.

- Quit smoking: This is the best thing you can do for your health. Call the national QUIT line for help 137 848.
- Join a Pulmonary Rehabilitation class. Ask your doctor about a local class or call The Australian Lung Foundation on 1 800 654 301 for information on a class near you.
- Educate yourself about COPD. Call the Australian Lung Foundation for a package of educational material.
- Develop a regular exercise regime. Walking is the best exercise for COPD.
- *Lungs in Action* is an exercise program designed by The Australian Lung Foundation for those who have completed pulmonary rehabilitation. Call the Lung Foundation for information.
- It is normal to have feelings of anxiety and/or depression. If this happens to you, speak to your doctor.
- Develop an action plan with your doctor for when you are unwell.
- Understand what your medications are doing for you.
- Learn how to use your inhaler devices properly. Your healthcare team can help you.
- Make sure to have your annual vaccination for flu and five yearly vaccination for pneumonia
- Maintain a healthy diet.
- Make sure you have support around you. This can be a good general practice team; family support; a pulmonary rehabilitation group; and/or support group.

*Call The Australian Lung Foundation for educational resources and information on access to pulmonary rehabilitation programs and support groups.*

Helpline (within Australia): 1 800 654 301

W: [www.lungfoundation.com.au](http://www.lungfoundation.com.au)

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