

Triggers

A trigger is anything that causes you to have a flare up of your COPD or causes your symptoms to worsen.

Some triggers are:

- Cold air or humidity
- Wind
- Strong odors
- Smoke (primary or secondhand exposure)
- Exhaust from cars
- Certain foods/overeating
- Respiratory infections
- Stress and anxiety

If you know which triggers cause you to have symptoms, you should try to avoid them.

Trigger	Avoidance
Cold air	If this is one of your triggers, then try to wear a scarf over your nose and mouth to help warm up the air before it reaches your lungs. If you can, limit the amount of time you spend outside.
Humid air	Limit your amount of time outside. You can carry around a portable fan to help create a “breeze” to help you breathe better.
Strong winds	Protect yourself by covering your nose and mouth to decrease the effects of the winds.
Strong odors, Perfumes, Cleaning products	Know which odors affect your breathing and limit exposure to them. Ask those who are close to you to not wear strong perfumes or lotions. Wear a face mask to protect yourself if you have to use certain cleaning products.
Smoke	Ask those around you to not smoke. Go to places that are non-smoking.
Car fumes	Limit the amount of time you spend in parking garages. Try to park in more open areas.
Certain foods	Know which foods cause you to feel more bloated, in turn affecting your breathing and limit them.
Overeating	A full stomach pushes up on your lungs and makes it harder for you to breathe. Split your meals into smaller ones so your body doesn't have to work so hard to digest one larger one.
Stress/ Anxiety	Practice <u>Breathing and Relaxation techniques</u> .
Colds/Viruses	Make sure that you talk to your MD about getting a flu shot every year and a pneumonia vaccine every 5 years. Practice good infection control by washing your hands often and staying away from other people who are sick.

If you do start to have a change in your symptoms, or you develop new symptoms you should call your doctor immediately.