



What Other Conditions Should I Watch for Along With My COPD?

Unfortunately, most people with COPD also have other chronic medical problems according to WedMD. These include high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, heart disease, diabetes, depression, osteoporosis and cancer. These “other conditions” are referred to as “comorbidities.” Many recent studies have been done on this link between COPD and other medical problems. For some reason, people with COPD seem to have more comorbid conditions than patients with other medical conditions. One study on over 1500 patients with COPD indicated those with COPD averaged having four other conditions while those without COPD averaged less than two.

These other conditions often affect your symptoms and limitations. They also often increase the risk of hospital stays for COPD patients. The most common conditions found in patients that were surveyed with COPD are as follows:

- Arthritis
- Heartburn
- High Blood Pressure
- Sinus Complaints
- High Cholesterol

- Depression
- Osteoporosis

The survey also revealed that those with multiple comorbid conditions were also more likely to be short of breath.

The link between COPD and heart disease has received the most attention. Studies have shown that patients with COPD are more likely to be hospitalized with symptoms of chest pain, heart attacks, heart failure and blood clots.

In a large study of nurses, those with COPD were much more likely to develop diabetes. Many also had low Vitamin D levels. Osteoporosis is very common in both men and women with COPD. Men in their 60s and above with COPD have the same risk of getting osteoporosis as postmenopausal women. Anxiety and depression are also found more often in patients with COPD than with other serious chronic diseases. Even heartburn has been proven to lead to exacerbations at times.

People with COPD are at a higher risk of getting lung cancer - especially women. Most of these conditions are caused by continuing to smoke. COPD is the leading cause of hospital stays and this is



professional oxygen and cpap services

**3586 California Road
Orchard Park, New York 14127
Ph: 716-667-9600 • 1-866-667-9600
Fax: 716-972-0219
www.pro2llc.com**

especially true for older adults. These comorbid conditions are contributing factors in many hospital stays.

Lung inflammation is common in COPD patients both in the early and later stages of the disease. Studies have shown that patients with COPD not only have increased lung inflammation, they also tend to have signs of “systemic” inflammation. This can contribute to other organ damage such as to the muscles, the bones or even the heart.

With this knowledge, what should those with COPD do about these possible comorbidities?

First and foremost, **DON'T SMOKE!**

Secondly, be aware of the symptoms of these comorbid conditions so that you are able to recognize them early on. For example, with hypertension you may experience nose bleeds, headaches or dizzy spells. With osteoporosis you might experience back pain, loss of height over time, stooped posture or frequent bone fractures. Symptoms of depression to watch for are sadness, loss of interest or pleasure in activities you once enjoyed, fatigue or loss of energy, inability to sleep and/or difficulty concentrating.

If you have any of the above symptoms or any others that you are unsure of, be sure and discuss them with your physician. Many of these comorbid conditions can be treated with various modalities including diet, medication, exercise, etc.

“I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year.”
— Charles Dickens

Tips for Eating Healthy During the Holidays

Enjoy the holidays, plan a time for activity, incorporate healthy recipes into your holiday meals, and don't restrict yourself from enjoying your favorite holiday foods. In the long run, your mind and body will both thank you.

References:

"COPD Comorbid Conditions: Heart Disease, Osteoporosis, and More." *WebMD*. Web. <<http://www.webmd.com/lung/copd/the-importance-of-comorbidities>>.

"Depression." *NIMH RSS*. Web. <<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/depression/what-are-the-signs-and-symptoms-of-depression.shtml>>.