

Health Awareness

Managing A COPD Diagnosis—Tips For Living Well

(NAPSA)—It can be confusing and scary when someone first finds out that he or she has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), a leading cause of death in the United States—but there are ways to keep living life to the fullest.

The Problem

Recently diagnosed patients and their families can be taken by surprise—they might not know what COPD is, what it means for their future or how the diagnosis will affect their ability to stay active. COPD is among the most common, underdiagnosed, debilitating, deadly and costly diseases to manage, and for those who have recently been diagnosed, it can be difficult to figure out how to manage this life change. What's more, over 15 million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD and the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute estimates that another 12 million are undiagnosed or developing COPD.

COPD Signs

Common symptoms of COPD are shortness of breath, wheezing, or a chronic cough, as well as chest tightness. Unfortunately, some people avoid getting diagnosed due to lack of awareness and the associated social stigma with COPD. This causes many people to wait too long to get tested and often leads to a late-stage diagnosis where people have already lost lung function.

One Man's Story

Marathoner Russell Winwood had a difficult time coming to terms with his diagnosis and found it challenging to move forward with his everyday routine. He relied on the support of his family to keep going and, just six months after his diagnosis, Winwood completed his first full Ironman. He continues to participate in triathlons around the world. Winwood shares his personal journey in hopes of inspiring other COPD patients to live an active lifestyle, showing that a COPD diagnosis does not need to stop people from enjoying their favorite activities.



There are many ways you can learn to cope with COPD.

What You Can Do

For recently diagnosed COPD patients, Winwood offers this advice for living well:

- **Knowledge:** Understand what it means to have COPD. Work with your doctor to create a customized action plan to help track progress.
- **Treatment:** While there's no cure for COPD, there are many treatment options including prescription drugs, positive airway pressure (PAP) therapy, portable oxygen concentrators, and ventilation therapy that can help you maintain a better quality of life. By researching and having a strong understanding of the treatment options available, you can have a more educated conversation with physicians about care plans.
- **Nutrition:** A healthy diet is incredibly important for COPD patients as a poor diet can make symptoms worse. The right nutrition can even help you breathe easier. Meet with a nutritionist to gain an understanding of where your current diet stands to help with your diagnosis.
- **Exercise:** Exercise can help improve cardiorespiratory fitness levels by strengthening large muscle groups within one's body while also improving circulation. Find an exercise that works for you and encourage friends and family to participate with you.

Learn More

If you suspect that you or a loved one may have COPD, head to your physician for a spirometry test and visit www.Philips.com/WorldCOPDDay for further information about COPD.