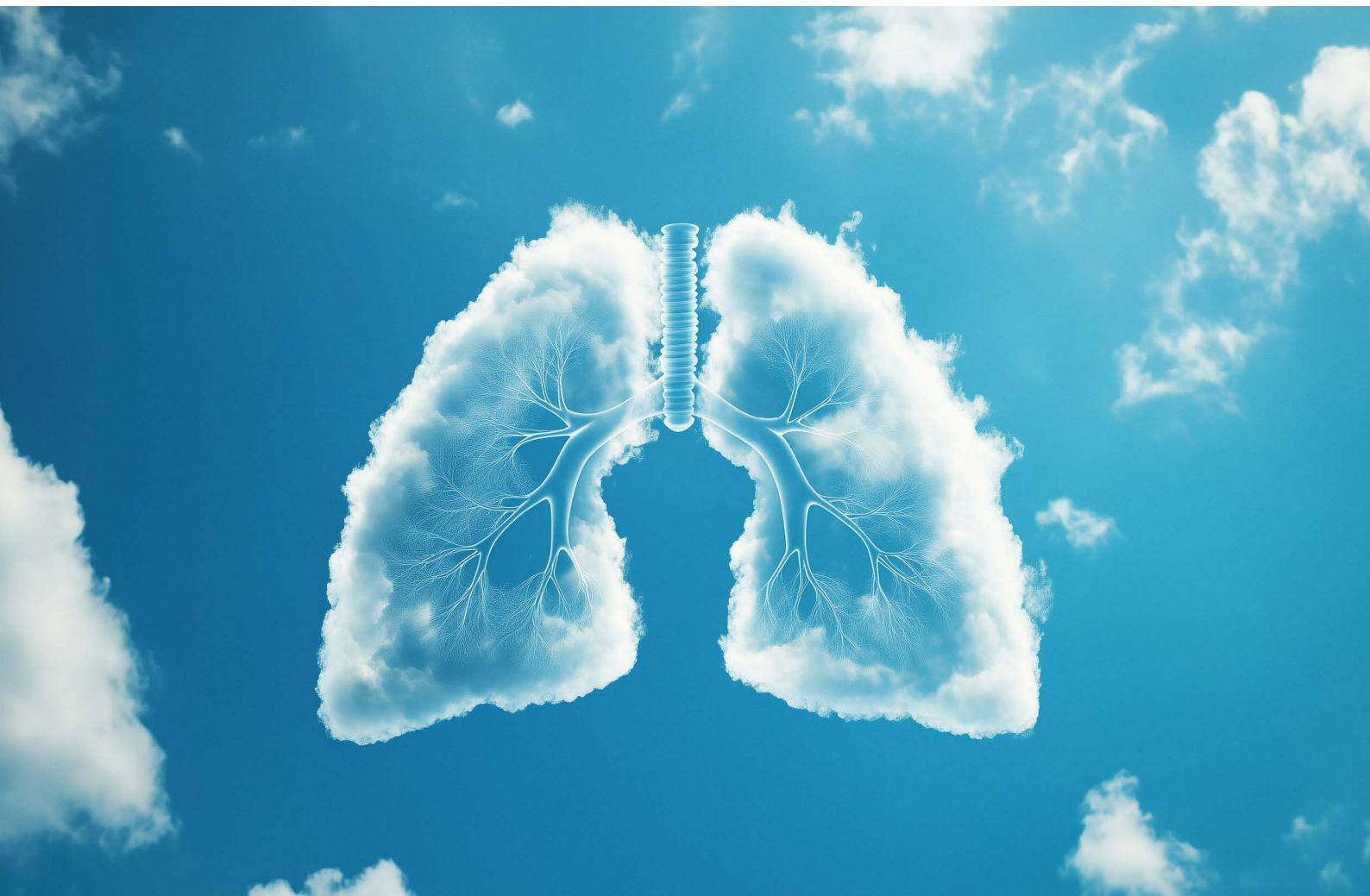


Outreach

For Members of Benefits USA



Keep Your Lungs Healthy Defend Against Chronic Lung Diseases

With each breath in, your lungs take in life-giving oxygen. The oxygen then travels through your blood to every cell in your body. With each breath out, your lungs release carbon dioxide, the waste produced when your cells burn energy. If something goes wrong with your breathing, it can impact your whole body and your daily life.

Many different symptoms can signal a lung problem. You may have coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath. Your chest can feel tight, like someone is squeezing or sitting on it. You may find it hard to take a deep breath. You might become short of breath easily or feel tired all the time.

Sometimes these symptoms are temporary. They can be caused by things like stress, allergies, or infections. But if you have lung symptoms that last for more than a few weeks, it's important to talk to your doctor. These symptoms could indicate a chronic lung disease.

Your risk for chronic lung diseases may be higher if you inherit certain genes from your parents. But many people who develop a chronic lung disease have no genetic risk factors. Exposure to certain environmental factors, like cigarette smoke, dust, and pollution, can also increase your risk.

The good news is that you can take steps to help prevent many chronic lung diseases. If they do develop, catching them and starting treatment early can improve your quality of life. Researchers are also testing better ways to identify and treat these conditions.

Blocked Air Flow

The most common types of chronic lung problems are called obstructive lung diseases. Asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are the most common of these.

In obstructive lung diseases, “air flow is the problem,” explains Dr. Andrew Lipton, medical director of the lung function lab at NIH. “It’s hard for air to come into or go out of the lungs.”

In asthma, swelling in the lungs makes the airways narrower than normal. They also become very sensitive to things like dust and pollen. Asthma most often develops in childhood.

Asthma can impact your day-to-day life. An asthma attack can make it hard to breathe for hours or days. An attack can even lead to a trip to the hospital and can sometimes be fatal.

But “if you take your medications [as prescribed],” says Dr. Kathryn Blake, an asthma researcher at Nemours Children’s Health, “most people can be virtually symptom-free.”

Managing symptoms can help kids and adults do the things they love, like sports, she adds. But many teens and young adults with asthma don’t use their medications correctly. Confusion about when to take medications can play a role, Blake says. Or teens may forget when they are busy. Other factors like peer pressure can add difficulty.

“Teenagers don’t want to be seen as being different,” she says. “They don’t want to stand out. They would rather limit their activities than take out and use their inhaler.”

Blake and her team are testing whether regular video chats with a pharmacist can help teens take their asthma medications more regularly.

“It’s kind of like having a tutor,” she says. “It’s just someone there to help you along and figure out what issues are impeding your care.”

Some kids will grow out of asthma, Blake says. But many don’t. If you don’t treat your asthma, the symptoms are likely to get worse over time.

In COPD, the tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs become partly blocked. Smoking is the main risk factor for the disease. But about 1 out of every 4 people who develop COPD has never smoked.

COPD gets worse with time. But treatments can slow its progression and make you feel better. Medications can help some people breathe more

easily. Others may benefit from oxygen therapy or rehabilitation programs. NIH-funded researchers are studying whether treating COPD earlier can help people live longer. They’re also working on new drugs that may stop COPD from getting worse.

Restricted Breathing

Another group of lung diseases are called interstitial lung diseases. In these diseases, lung tissue may become inflamed or stiff, or scarred by damage. This prevents your lungs from fully expanding when you breathe. “These things all reduce the volume of the lungs,” explains Lipton.

Treating interstitial lung diseases can be tricky, because the cause can’t always be found, explains Dr. Kevin Flaherty, a pulmonary disease expert at the University of Michigan. “But if we can find the cause, then we can target it,” he says. For example, treating another disease that is causing scarring in the lungs may help.

Unfortunately, the cause of a common interstitial lung disease, called idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis or IPF, isn’t known. People over age 50, men, and those who smoke are more likely to get it. Some people live for years with the disease. But for others, the condition quickly worsens. Drugs are available that can slow lung scarring over time. But researchers are searching for better treatments.

More than a decade ago, an NIH-funded study found that suppressing the immune system didn’t help people with IPF. The study also tested an antioxidant used to treat certain lung diseases. But it also did not appear to have any benefit.

Recently, researchers looked at biological samples from the patients in that study. They found genetic differences between the patients that may have affected whether the treatment worked. Patients with a certain genetic change seem to have benefited from the treatment. Those without that genetic change showed no benefit or harmful effects from the treatment.

NIH is now funding a clinical trial to see if patients with certain genetic factors can benefit from the antioxidant treatment. If it works, this would be the first personalized treatment for IPF, Flaherty explains.

For now, there are many things you can do to lower your risk of developing a chronic lung disease. See the Wise Choices box for tips to keep your lungs as healthy as possible.

If you have lung symptoms, talk to your doctor. Many tests for chronic lung diseases are simple. Some can even be done at your regular doctor’s office. Treating these diseases early can help you stay healthier for longer.

Article reprinted from NIH-News In Health

Wise Choices



Quit smoking, or don't start

Get free help at smokefree.gov, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or text QUIT to 47848.



Avoid secondhand tobacco smoke

Stay away from places where smoking is allowed. Ask any friends and family members who smoke to do it outside.



Be physically active

Physical activity can help strengthen your heart and lungs so they work better. Talk to your doctor about what level of physical activity is right for you.



Limit exposure to air pollution

Check the Air Quality Index before outdoor activities. Make sure your home is aired out and cleaned regularly.



Stay up to date on vaccines

Make sure vaccines are current against diseases that harm the lungs. These can include flu, COVID-19, and pneumonia.



Use protective gear

If your work exposes you to dust, silica, allergens, chemical fumes, or other pollution sources.



Make good sleep a priority

Poor sleep can cause lung disease symptoms to worsen. Sleep is also critical to overall health.

Paying too much for medications?

The RxLess pharmacy discount card has saved patients up to 88% off their prescription medications across 70,000+ pharmacies nationwide.

The RxLess card is easy to download and free to use, with no obligation or sign-up required.

How RxLess works



Scan this QR code to get started:



The table below shows recent pharmacy transactions by RxLess cardholders.

Medication	Qty	Retail	RxLess Price	RxLess Savings	Pharmacy
CARISOPRODOL 350 MG TABLET	90	\$54.99	\$13.60	\$41.39 75%	WALGREENS
GAVILYTE-G SOLUTION	4000	\$41.99	\$10.75	\$31.24 74%	KROGER
OXYCODONE-ACETAMINOPHEN 5-325	90	\$116.99	\$14.05	\$102.94 88%	CVS
ARIPIPIRAZOLE 30 MG TABLET	30	\$1126.69	\$19.67	\$1107.02 98%	PAVILIONS PHARMACY
TADALAFIL 20 MG TABLET	10	\$887.99	\$8.31	\$879.68 99%	HY-VEE
PREGABALIN 50 MG CAPSULE	90	\$639.99	\$20.76	\$619.23 97%	RITE AID
PHENAZOPYRIDINE 100 MG TAB	15	\$32.79	\$6.65	\$26.14 80%	CVS
AMLODIPINE BESYLATE 2.5 MG TAB	90	\$181.27	\$11.71	\$169.56 94%	BRENTWOOD PHARMACY
CLOMID 50 MG TABLET	15	\$146.99	\$21.96	\$125.03 85%	RITE AID
LISINOPRIL 10 MG TABLET	90	\$73.69	\$9.97	\$63.72 86%	SAFEWAY



Prescription Savings Program

ID: BD31011471
Group: ZA2963
BIN: 610312
PCN: 01

INFORMATION:
Please show this card to the pharmacy on every visit.
This program is not insurance.

Pharmacy Services: 1-844-479-5377



This card is already active for YOU!

No expiration date. No personal information required. Everyone is eligible to receive the prescription savings card!

This is not insurance. Void where prohibited by law.





Grinding Your Teeth?

Do you often find that you're clenching your jaw or rubbing your teeth together? Do you tend to wake up with a sore jaw, ear pain, or headache? If so, you may have a condition called bruxism. That's the medical term for clenching your jaw or teeth or grinding your teeth.

Mild or occasional tooth grinding or clenching may not cause problems. But frequent or severe bruxism can lead to jaw pain, fatigue, and headaches. It can damage your teeth and make them crack, loosen, or even fall out.

Bruxism is more common in children than adults. Many people with bruxism don't realize they have it, especially if it occurs during sleep.

The causes of bruxism are not fully understood. But the condition has been linked to stress, depression, smoking, alcohol, caffeine, certain medications, and other factors.

If you think you may be grinding or clenching your teeth, talk to a health care provider. They might suggest ways to reduce stress, relieve depression, or improve sleep. They can also suggest how to protect your teeth and break the habit of tooth grinding.

Visit your dentist regularly. They can check for signs of bruxism, such as tooth wear and jaw muscle tenderness. Learn more about [bruxism](#).

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS

The Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA will be held at 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131, on Wednesday, November 12, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. (CST) for election of Directors and for the transaction of such other business as may properly come before the meeting and any adjournment thereof.

The above notice is given pursuant to the By-Laws of the Association.

PROXY Benefits USA November 12, 2025 Annual Meeting of Members THIS PROXY IS SOLICITED ON BEHALF OF BENEFITS USA

The undersigned member of Benefits USA does hereby constitute and appoint the President of Benefits USA, the true and lawful attorney(s) of the undersigned with full power of substitution, to appear and act as the proxy or proxies of the undersigned at the Annual Meeting of the Members of Benefits USA and at any and all adjournments thereof, and to vote for and in the name, place and stead of the undersigned, as fully as the undersigned might or could do if personally present, as set forth below:

1. FOR [], or to [] WITHHOLD AUTHORITY to vote for, the following nominees for Board of Directors:
Don Breckenridge Jr, John Ingman, and Zachary Smilack
2. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

This proxy, when properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned member. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted for the election of directors and officers.

DATED: _____, 2025

Signature _____

Name (please print) _____

Please date and sign and return promptly to 12444 Powerscourt Drive, Suite 500A, St. Louis, MO 63131 whether or not you expect to attend this meeting. The Proxy is revocable and will not affect your right to vote in person in the event that you attend the meeting.

St. Louis, Missouri
October 6, 2025
Date

The Outreach Newsletter is published by:
Benefits USA

For information regarding your membership
and association services, call or write:

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Benefits USA
12444 Powerscourt Drive
Suite 500A
St. Louis, MO 63131

1-800-992-8044 or (636) 530-7200

Articles in this newsletter are meant to be informative, enlightening, and helpful to you. While all information contained herein is meant to be completely factual, it is always subject to change. Articles are not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

Consult your doctor before starting any exercise program.