COPD: MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD is a chronic disease of the lungs. Although COPD is a common lung disease there are still misconceptions that surround it. Read on to find out some of the more common COPD myths and the facts that dispel them.

1. **MYTH: SHORTNESS OF BREATH IS THE ONLY SYMPTOM OF COPD**
   
   FACT: Breathlessness can be one of the symptoms of COPD but other common signs to look for but include breathlessness, a persistent cough which produces phlegm, chest infections and wheezing.1

2. **MYTH: COPD ONLY HAPPENS TO OLDER PEOPLE**
   
   FACT: COPD can begin in your 40s, or even earlier, although many people are often not diagnosed until their 50s and 60s.2

3. **MYTH: COPD IS THE SAME AS ASTHMA**
   
   FACT: Although symptoms appear similar asthma and COPD are not the same. It is important to get the correct diagnosis from your doctor.

4. **MYTH: I AM ALONE IN COPING WITH COPD**
   
   FACT: It is estimated that 364 million people are living with COPD symptoms globally.14 COPD patient groups worldwide offer advice and support to help you live with the condition.

5. **MYTH: NOTHING CAN BE DONE TO TREAT COPD**
   
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6. **MYTH: COPD INEVITABLY LEADS TO A WORSE QUALITY OF LIFE**
   
   FACT: A combination of treatment and adjustments to lifestyle can help you to achieve this.13

7. **MYTH: SMOKING IS THE ONLY CAUSE OF COPD**
   
   FACT: Although smoking is a leading cause, exposure to fumes, chemicals, dust or harmful pollutants can also result in COPD developing.3

8. **MYTH: EXERCISE WILL MAKE COPD WORSE**
   
   FACT: Exercise has been shown to be safe and beneficial for most people with COPD.4,5 Speak to your doctor or nurse about gentle exercises that are suitable for you.

9. **MYTH: I CAN’T DO ANY EXERCISE**
   
   FACT: It is possible to continue to lead a fulfilling life with COPD. A combination of treatment and adjustments to lifestyle can help you to achieve this.13

10. **MYTH: A HEALTHY DIET WILL NOT HELP WITH COPD**
    
    FACT: Maintaining a well-balanced diet, including eating fresh fruit and vegetables, can help you to increase your energy levels and improve your health.8,9,10

11. **MYTH: WEIGHT DOES NOT AFFECT COPD**
    
    FACT: Extra weight can make you more breathless and your symptoms worse. Maintaining a healthy weight can prevent this and reduce the severity of your symptoms.1,11

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References


Understanding COPD and the choices you can make to better manage the condition may help to improve your overall wellbeing. Explore COPD Choices to find more helpful advice and information.

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