



Keeping Our Lungs Healthy

Lungs are the organs that promote the gas exchange that keeps us alive. They are active every moment of our lives: In a single day, we take over 20,000 breaths. Our lungs are vital, and we must keep them healthy so they can perform their roles in supplying oxygen, removing wastes and toxins from our blood, and defending our bodies against foreign intruders.

Lung disease is the #3 killer in America. More than 35 million Americans are living with chronic lung disease such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis. Asthma, the leading chronic illness among children in the United States, is a particular growing concern.

Keeping our lungs healthy begins with minimizing our exposure to environmental factors that threaten our lung health including:

- Tobacco and wood smoke (including secondary smoke)
- Allergens (particles that cause allergies) such as dust mites, pollen, molds, pollution and animal dander
- Colds and flus

Other important strategies include:

- Using and properly maintaining air filters and air conditioners
- Being observant of chemical spills and clouds of fumes, and knowing how to respond
- Using face masks when needed, and covering coughs and sneezes properly
- Reading product labels and worksite Material Safety Data Sheets
- Learning the signs of distress, such as persistent coughing or shortness of breath, and getting the appropriate medical help
- Regular cardiovascular (aerobic) exercise is important for keeping the circulatory and respiratory systems working at peak efficiency
- If you or someone in your family has asthma, be sure to take your medications as prescribed by your doctor

Our best defense in lung health is to be proactive, so use these preventive strategies to keep your lungs healthy!

Sources:
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/index.htm>
<http://www.lungusa.org>

Treatment Disclaimer: This poster is for education purposes, not for use in the treatment of medical conditions. It is based on skilled medical opinion as of the date of publication. However, medical science advances and changes rapidly. Furthermore, diagnosis and treatment are often complex and involve more than one disease process or medical issue to determine proper care. If you believe you may have a medical condition described in the poster, consult your doctor.

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