

**DONATE**

CT

Select your location to view local American Lung Association information near you

Enter your zipcode

Zip Code  Click to search by zip code

or  
Select your state

State



## Warning Signs Of Lung Disease

---

[www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org) > [Lung Health and Diseases](#) > [Warning Signs of Lung Disease](#)

# Warning Signs of Lung Disease

A nagging cough or slight wheeze may barely register in the course of our busy days, but it's critically important to pay attention to even mild symptoms. Sometimes people think having trouble breathing is just something that comes with **getting older**. It is important to pay attention to these symptoms as they could be the first signs of lung disease, including COPD, asthma and lung cancer. Knowing the early warning signs of lung disease can help you receive treatment before the disease becomes serious or even life threatening. If you experience any of the following warning signs, make an appointment with your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Early detection could save your life.



### Warning Signs

**Chronic cough:** A cough that you have had for a month or longer is considered chronic. This is an important early symptom that tells you something is wrong with your respiratory system.

**Shortness of breath:** It's not normal to experience **shortness of breath** that doesn't go away after exercising, or that you have after little or no exertion. Labored or difficult breathing—the feeling that it is hard to breathe in or out—is also a warning sign.

**Chronic mucus production:** Mucus, also called sputum or phlegm, is produced by the airways as a defense against infections or irritants. If your mucus production has lasted a month or longer, this could indicate lung disease.

**Wheezing:** Noisy breathing or wheezing is a sign that something unusual is blocking your lungs' airways or making them too narrow.

**Coughing up blood:** If you are coughing up blood, it may be coming from your lungs or upper respiratory tract. Wherever it's coming from, it signals a health problem.

**Chronic chest pain:** Unexplained chest pain that lasts for a month or more—especially if it gets worse when you breathe in or cough—also is a warning sign.

### Talking to Your Doctor

Prepare for a visit to your healthcare provider by following these steps:

Take a copy of your medical records with you. Or, see if your previous healthcare provider can send a copy. If you are unable to obtain your medical records, you can also write a short note about your health problems, when they occurred and the healthcare provider(s) that took care of you.

Make a list of all the medicines that you are using now. This means prescribed and over-the-counter medicines, as well as herbs and supplements and any non-traditional methods you use to treat your condition.

Make a list of all the healthcare providers you see and why you see them.

Make a list of the symptoms you are having and note which ones bother you the most. Write down when they started and what you have done (if anything) to make them better.

Download the "Getting Ready for Your Next Office Visit Worksheet ([English](#) | [Spanish](#))" to help you prepare for your next office visit.

### Questions about Lung Health?

Call our **Lung HelpLine**. Get free counseling with our registered nurses, respiratory therapists and quit smoking specialists; 1-800-LUNGUSA (586-4872).

*Reviewed and approved by the American Lung Association Scientific and Medical Editorial Review Panel. Last reviewed March 15, 2018.*

*Page Last Updated: March 20, 2018*

**Lung Health & Diseases**

**Lung Disease Lookup**

How Lungs Work  
 Protecting Your Lungs  
 Warning Signs of Lung Disease  
 Lung Procedures, Tests & Treatment  
 Asthma  
 COPD  
 Influenza  
 Lung Cancer  
 Pneumonia



Ask An Expert

Questions about your lung health? Need help finding healthcare? Call 1-800-LUNGUSA.  
Get help



We need your generous support

Make a difference by delivering research, education and advocacy to those impacted by lung disease.  
Donate now



What is LUNG FORCE?

LUNG FORCE unites women and their loved ones across the country to stand together in the fight against lung cancer.

Get involved



Sign up for the latest news about lung health and healthy air

Submit

+ LUNG HEALTH INFORMATION

---

+ PROGRAMS & SERVICES

---

+ FUNDRAISERS

---

+ ABOUT THE LUNG ASSOCIATION

---

+ SIGNATURE REPORTS

---

©2018 American Lung Association | 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872) | [Submit A Question](#) | [Live Chat](#)  
| [Contact](#)



[Media](#)

[Blog](#)

[Member Center](#)

[RSS](#)

[Terms Of Use](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Sitemap](#)

[Our Family Of Sites](#)

AMERICAN  
LUNG ASSOCIATION