



Emphysema / COPD

What is Emphysema and COPD?

Emphysema is a condition that affects your lungs, causing tiny air spaces (alveoli) to combine and form larger air spaces. This can make it harder for you to breathe.

Emphysema is most commonly seen in people who smoke or have smoked in the past. However, it can also result from long-term exposure to irritants in the environment, such as air pollution or chemical fumes.

If you have emphysema, you might experience:

- A persistent cough
- Shortness of breath
- Increased phlegm production
- Frequent chest infections

These symptoms can often be managed with medication.

COPD is a long-term condition that includes a group of lung diseases characterized by narrowed airways, which makes it difficult to exhale air. Many people with emphysema also have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD).

A diagnosis of COPD is made when a patient has a combination of lung symptoms (like cough, shortness of breath, increased phlegm, and chest infections) along with confirmed airway obstruction as shown by a spirometry test, which is a type of breathing test done after taking a dose of an inhaler.

What do I need to do?

Important Steps to Take After Your Lung Scan

We want to ensure you have the best care possible following your recent lung scan. Please read the following information carefully:

1. **If you are experiencing breathlessness or have had a chest infection in the past 12 months** please reach out to your GP surgery for further guidance. They have received your results and will expect your call. They may ask you to see a respiratory nurse at the surgery for an appointment to discuss your results/symptoms.
2. **If You Have COPD/Emphysema:** If you have a diagnosed condition of COPD or emphysema and are managing well with your medication, there is no need to inform your GP about the scan findings. The appearance of your lungs is expected in this case. However, it is crucial to continue:
 - Following your current medication routine
 - Attending your scheduled review appointments
 - Considering quitting smoking if you currently smoke
3. **Urgent Symptoms:** - If you experience severe shortness of breath or become very unwell with a cough, it is important to contact your GP surgery immediately. If your surgery is closed, you can call NHS 111. In a medical emergency, please dial 999. Make sure to mention your symptoms and the results of your scan when you contact them.

What can I do to improve the condition of my lungs?

The most helpful thing you can do to improve your lungs is to stop smoking. Contact LiveWell Dorset at www.livewell Dorset.co.uk/ or freephone 0800 401628 Monday-Friday, 9am-6.30pm.

For more information:

[BK2 COPD v4 downloadable PDF.pdf \(blf.org.uk\)](#) (British lung foundation online booklet)

www.patient.info/chest-lungs/chronic-obstructive-pulmonary-disease-leaflet/emphysema

[What is COPD? | Asthma + Lung UK \(asthmaandlung.org.uk\)](#)