

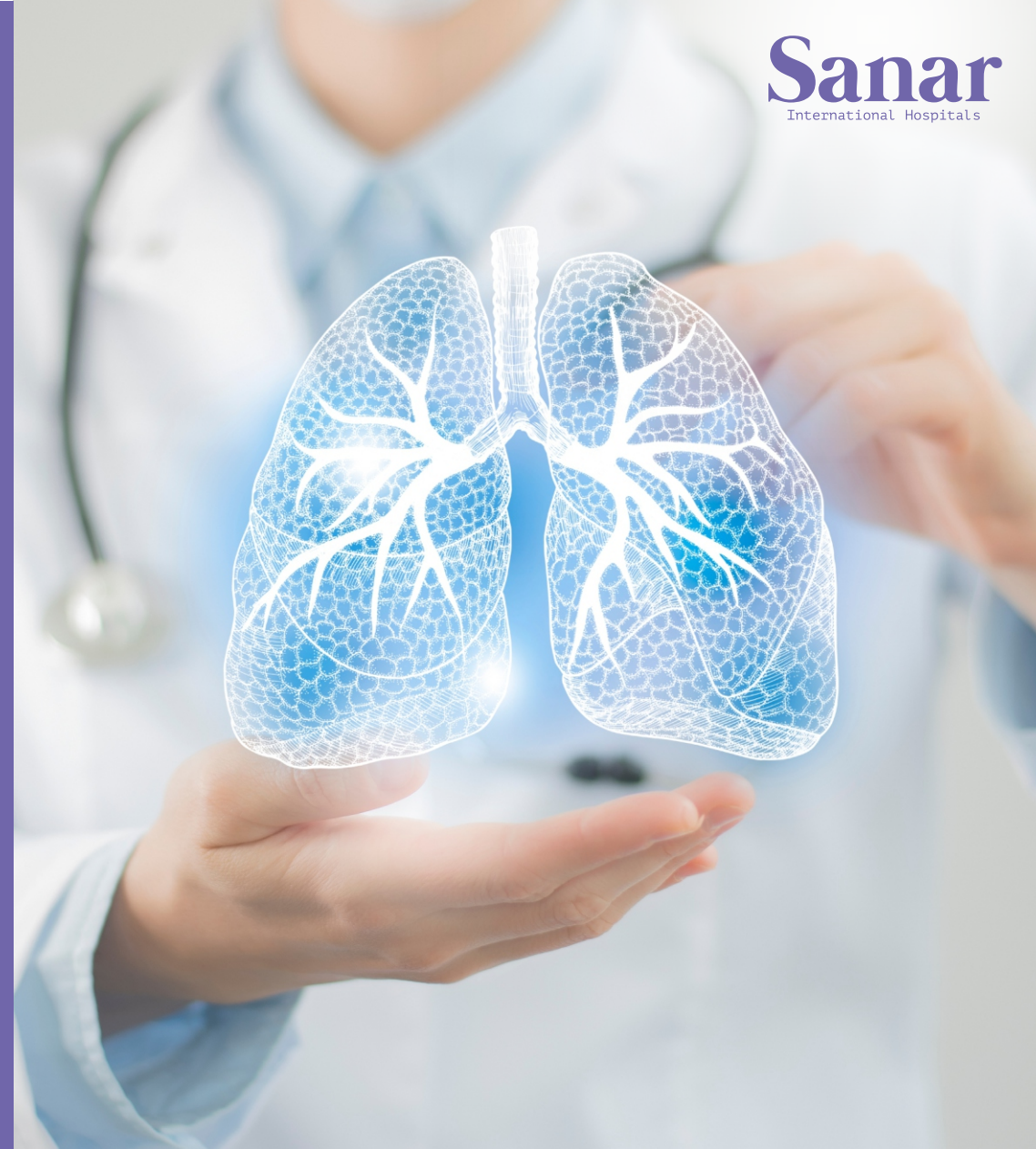
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Understanding  
**Chronic Obstructive  
Pulmonary Disease (COPD)?**

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## What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a progressive lung disease that makes it difficult to breathe. It encompasses a group of lung conditions, including Chronic Bronchitis and Emphysema, where airflow is obstructed, leading to breathing difficulties. COPD is a long-term condition that worsens over time, significantly impacting quality of life.

### Causes of COPD

The primary cause of COPD is long-term exposure to irritants that damage the lungs and airways. The most common cause is cigarette smoke, but other factors such as environmental pollutants, occupational dust and chemicals, and hereditary can also contribute.

### Symptoms of COPD

- **Shortness of Breath:** Gradually worsening over time, shortness of breath is a hallmark symptom of COPD
- **Persistent Cough:** A chronic cough that produces secretions is another common sign of COPD
- **Wheezing:** Noisy breathing or wheezing is often heard during exhalation
- **Chest Tightness:** A feeling of tightness or heaviness in the chest may be experienced



### Diagnosis

COPD is diagnosed through a combination of medical history, physical examination, lung function tests, and imaging studies like chest X-rays or CT scans.

### Treatment

While there is no cure for COPD, various treatments can help manage symptoms and slow the progression of the disease.

- **Medications:** Bronchodilators and Anti-inflammatory medications can improve airflow and reduce inflammation
- **Pulmonary Rehabilitation:** This comprehensive programme includes exercise, education, and support to improve lung function and overall well-being
- **Oxygen Therapy:** In some cases, supplemental oxygen may be prescribed to ensure the body receives enough oxygen
- **Lifestyle Changes:** Quitting smoking, avoiding environmental pollutants, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle can positively impact COPD
- **Vaccinations:** Annual flu shots and pneumonia vaccines are recommended to prevent respiratory infections



### Managing COPD at Home

- **Quit Smoking:** If you smoke, quitting is the most effective way to slow down the progression of COPD
- **Stay Active:** Regular physical activity can improve lung function and overall health
- **Healthy Diet:** A balanced diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and lean proteins can help support the immune system
- **Stay Hydrated:** Drinking enough water can help keep secretions in the airways thin and easier to cough up



### When to Seek Medical Attention

If one experiences a sudden worsening of symptoms, such as increased shortness of breath, chest pain, or confusion, seek emergency medical attention immediately.

COPD is a chronic condition that requires ongoing management and support. With the right treatment and lifestyle changes, one can take control of the symptoms, and manage them effectively. Work closely with the healthcare team to develop a personalised treatment plan and prescribe medications to improve symptoms and enhance the overall quality of life.