

WHAT CAUSES COPD

The most important risk factor for COPD by far is cigarette smoking. Pipe, cigar, other types of tobacco smoking and passive exposure to cigarette smoke are also risk factors.

Other documented causes of COPD include:

- Occupational dusts and chemicals (vapors, irritants, and fumes) when the exposures are sufficiently intense or prolonged.
- Indoor air pollution from fuel used for cooking and heating in poorly vented dwellings.
- Outdoor air pollution adds to the total burden of inhaled particles in the lungs, but its role in causing COPD is uncertain.

Passive exposure to cigarette smoke also contributes to respiratory symptoms and COPD. Respiratory infections in early childhood are associated with reduced lung function and increased respiratory symptoms in adulthood.