



## Broward County Government Newsletter

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### Community Care Plan, “the health plan with a heart”

#### November is COPD Awareness Month

##### What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is also called chronic bronchitis or emphysema. It is a chronic condition that makes it hard to breathe. COPD is a progressive disease which means it gets worse over time.

##### What Causes COPD?

Irritation that damages the lungs and airways overtime causes COPD. People with asthma can develop COPD. The most common irritant in the United States is cigarette smoke. Secondhand smoke from breathing in the air where other people were smoking, chemical fumes, and air pollution can irritate the lungs and airways. A rare genetic condition, alpha-1 antitrypsin (AAT) deficiency, may also cause COPD.

##### What can I do to prevent COPD or slow its progression?

Not smoking or quitting smoking can help prevent and alleviate COPD symptoms. You should also follow the treatment plan your doctor gives you, and discuss getting the flu and pneumonia vaccines.

##### What are the signs and symptoms of COPD?

- A ‘smokers cough’: an ongoing or mucus-filled cough
- Shortness of breath (including during physical activity)
- Whistling or wheezing when breathing
- The tightness of the chest

##### When should I seek emergency care for COPD symptoms?

- You cannot catch your breath
- You cannot talk
- Your nails or lips are blue/grey
- Your family and friends notice you are not mentally alert
- Fast heartbeat
- The treatment you got from your doctor for your COPD is not working

Source: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/copd)

*Always consult your physician before making changes to your lifestyle or healthcare routine. This information is available for free in other languages. Please call Member Services at 1-866-224-5701 Monday – Friday 8:00am – 7:00 pm EST. For hearing impaired assistance call: TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303. Si usted necesita esta información en Español llame al 1-866-224-5701 TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303 de Lunes a Viernes desde las 8:00am a 7:00pm EST. Si ou vie resevwa enfomeseyon sa en Kreyol rele nimewo telefon sa 1-866-224-5701 TTY/TDD 1-855-655-5303 Lendi jiska Vandredi de 8:00am a 7:00pm EST.*