

LEARN ABOUT

EMPHYSEMA



HEALTH
Department

This fact sheet is for information only and is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or as a substitute for consultation with a health care provider.

What is Emphysema?

- Emphysema is a lung disease and a type of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease that makes it difficult to breathe
- It occurs when the tiny air sacs in your lungs are damaged and merge into larger air pockets
- These larger pockets trap old air, making it harder for fresh air to enter and for your body to get enough oxygen

Key Facts

Emphysema can be caused by smoking, dirty air, or a rare genetic condition.

Early signs include:

- Trouble breathing
- Coughing up mucus
- Wheezing is a whistling sound when breathing
- A tight feeling in your chest

A doctor can find out if you have emphysema by:

- Asking about your health
- Checking your breathing
- Doing tests like chest X-rays, CT scans, or a test called Spirometry, which checks how well you can breathe

Can it Be Cured?

Emphysema cannot be cured, but symptoms can be managed by:

- Quitting smoking and avoiding secondhand smoke
- Taking prescribed medicines to improve breathing
- Using oxygen therapy if needed
- In some cases, special treatments may help, such as airway valves, surgery to remove damaged lung tissue, or a lung transplant