

# BREATHE BETTER: Avoiding Troublemakers

Knowing what affects your lungs and worsens your breathing will help you gain control to breathe better. If you know what triggers bad breathing spells, you can eliminate some of the causes and gain control over others.

## Air Pollution

- Dirt and fumes are always added to the air.
- Cigarette smoke is an unsafe pollutant.
- Some dirt stays in your lungs, where it builds up and can cause infections and lung damage.
- In polluted air, some gases such as carbon monoxide can rob your blood of oxygen, making you feel worse on days when air pollution is heavy.

## What to do About Air Pollution

- Avoid places with dirty air such as traffic jams, parking garages, and smoke-filled rooms.
- Avoid breathing in cigarette, cigar, or pipe smoke.
- Avoid using strong chemicals and aerosol sprays.
- Check the news for air pollution alerts.
- Stay indoors on high pollution days.

## Infections

- Infections are a major reason that people with lung disease enter hospitals.

## Preventing Infections

- Get a flu shot annually.
- Choose a healthy diet.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Keep your lungs clear of mucus.
- Drink a lot of fluids.
- If possible, avoid crowds and people with colds.

## Weather

- Weather extremes can make breathing difficult.
- Cold air puts extra strain on your lungs and hot, humid air flares up symptoms.

## What to do About the Weather

- During cold weather, cover your face or at least your head with a cold-weather mask or a scarf.
- Breathe in through your nose to warm the air.
- During hot, humid weather stay indoors in an air-conditioned environment and limit your activities.