

## Common Respiratory Illnesses and Their Treatments

The **respiratory system** delivers oxygen to the body and expels carbon dioxide, ensuring that all organs function properly. However, various **respiratory illnesses** can disrupt this process, leading to difficulty breathing, discomfort, and even life-threatening conditions. Below are some of the most common respiratory diseases, their symptoms, and available treatments.

### ➤ Asthma

Asthma is a **chronic inflammatory condition** that affects the airways, making them swollen and sensitive to various triggers, such as allergens, cold air, exercise, or pollution. When triggered, the airways narrow, leading to **symptoms** like **wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath**.

### Treatment and Management

- ✓ Quick-relief **inhalers** (bronchodilators like albuterol) help relax airway muscles and provide immediate relief.
- ✓ Long-term control **medications** (such as corticosteroid inhalers) help reduce **inflammation** and prevent frequent attacks.
- ✓ Lifestyle **modifications**, including avoiding known triggers and maintaining a healthy environment, play a key role in managing asthma.

## ➤ Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

**COPD** is a progressive **lung disease** that includes two main conditions:

- ✓ **Emphysema** (damage to the **air sacs** in the lungs, reducing oxygen exchange).
- ✓ **Chronic bronchitis** (long-term inflammation of the bronchial tubes, causing mucus buildup).

**Symptoms** include **persistent coughing, excessive mucus production, breathlessness, wheezing, and fatigue**. The leading cause of COPD is smoking, though long-term exposure to air pollution and chemicals can also contribute.

## Treatment and Management

- ✓ **Bronchodilators** (inhaled medications that relax airway muscles and improve airflow).
- ✓ **Oxygen therapy** for severe cases where oxygen levels in the blood are low.
- ✓ **Pulmonary rehabilitation** (exercise and breathing techniques to improve lung function).
- ✓ **Quitting smoking** is the most effective way to slow disease progression.

## ➤ Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an **infection** that inflames the air sacs (alveoli) in one or both lungs, which may fill with **fluid** or **pus**. It can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or fungi and varies in severity from mild to life threatening.

**Symptoms** include **fever, chills, cough with phlegm, chest pain, difficulty breathing, and fatigue**. The elderly, young children, and individuals with weakened **immune systems** are at a higher risk.

## Treatment and Management

- ✓ **Bacterial pneumonia** is treated with antibiotics.
- ✓ **Viral pneumonia** requires rest, hydration, and antiviral medications in severe cases.
- ✓ **Oxygen therapy** may be necessary for patients with breathing difficulties.
- ✓ **Vaccination** (e.g., pneumococcal vaccine, flu shot) can help prevent pneumonia.

### ➤ Common Cold and Flu (Influenza)

Both the common cold and flu are **viral respiratory infections**, but the flu is typically more severe. They are highly contagious and spread through droplets from coughing or sneezing.

**Symptoms of the Common Cold:** Sneezing, runny nose, sore throat, mild cough, and congestion.

**Symptoms of the Flu:** Fever, body aches, chills, severe cough, fatigue, and sometimes vomiting.

## Treatment and Management

There is no cure, but symptom relief includes:

- ✓ **Rest** to allow the immune system to recover.
- ✓ **Fluids** (water, herbal tea, and warm soups) to stay hydrated.
- ✓ Over-the-counter **decongestants, pain relievers, and fever reducers** (e.g., ibuprofen)
- ✓ **Antiviral medications** may be prescribed for severe flu cases.
- ✓ **Annual flu vaccines** help prevent influenza and its complications.

## Main terms

- ✓ Respiratory system = Αναπνευστικό σύστημα
- ✓ Asthma = Άσθμα
- ✓ Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) = Χρόνια αποφρακτική πνευμονοπάθεια (ΧΑΠ)
- ✓ Emphysema = Εμφύσημα
- ✓ Chronic bronchitis = Χρόνια βρογχίτιδα
- ✓ Pneumonia = Πνευμονία
- ✓ Common cold = Κρυολόγημα
- ✓ Influenza (flu) = Γρίπη
- ✓ Tuberculosis (TB) = Φυματίωση
- ✓ Wheezing = Συριγμός
- ✓ Shortness of breath = Δύσπνοια
- ✓ Bronchodilators = Βρογχοδιασταλτικά
- ✓ Inhaler = Εισπνευστήρας
- ✓ Corticosteroids = Κορτικοστεροειδή
- ✓ Oxygen therapy = Οξυγονοθεραπεία
- ✓ Mucus production = Παραγωγή βλέννας
- ✓ Fever = Πυρετός
- ✓ Antibiotics = Αντιβιοτικά
- ✓ Decongestants = Αποσυμφορητικά
- ✓ Fluids = Υγρά
- ✓ Vaccination = Εμβολιασμός

- ✓ Contagious = Μεταδοτικός
- ✓ Cough = Βήχας
- ✓ Sore throat = Πονόλαιμος
- ✓ Night sweats = Νυχτερινές εφιδρώσεις
- ✓ Fatigue = Κόπωση
- ✓ Persistent cough = Επίμονος βήχας
- ✓ Chest pain = Πόνος στο στήθος
- ✓ Pulmonary rehabilitation = Πνευμονική αποκατάσταση