

# Lung health



Your lungs are a remarkable organ. They are perfectly designed to deliver oxygen into the blood at the perfect ratios to fuel your cells. They are also extremely efficient at releasing carbon dioxide from the body and if your lungs are working optimally, you won't even notice them expanding and contracting in your chest.

World Tuberculosis Day is on the 24th of March and although TB is highly treatable, this day highlights the importance of maintaining your lung health. There are many things you can do to ensure that your lungs remain in tip-top shape.

- ***Don't smoke anything. Ever.***

The tar in smoke makes it more difficult to breathe. Smoke is an irritant which can cause respiratory disorders such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and chronic bronchitis. Nicotine can cause fundamental changes to the tissue that can cause cancer. Smoking is the number one cause of lung disease in the world.

- ***Breathe clean.***

Part of avoiding smoke is to avoid smoky people and smoke-filled environments. Second-hand smoke and third-hand smoke is also toxic. Air pollution from traffic and factories is harmful to your lungs so limit your exposure especially if you suffer from respiratory disorders.

- ***Avoid infection.***

Colds and flu can cause serious lung infections. Take precautions to prevent infection: wash your

hands regularly with soap. Make sure you get vaccinated against the seasonal flu. If you do get sick, look after yourself, consult your doctor, and stay away from others.

- ***Make your home lung-safe.***

If you have a fireplace, make sure that you keep it clean of ash and that the chimney is clean and pulling smoke properly. Be sure to check for mould and brush your pets regularly to reduce pet dander. When doing home renovations, painting, or even cleaning, use a dust mask.

- ***Don't delay. Consult your doctor.***

Never ignore the signs of lung disease. If you have been coughing for two weeks or more, visit your doctor for a consultation. If your cough produces blood, visit your doctor immediately as a matter of emergency. Wheezing and coughing up phlegm for more than a month also warrants a doctor's visit. Make an appointment with your doctor if you experience any chest pain.

With the correct care, your lungs will last you a lifetime. Be sure to avoid infections and environmental irritants and if you smoke, consult your doctor about the best ways to stop.