Is COPD Keeping You Awake at Night? Try These Tips to Get a More Restful Sleep

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How to Sleep with COPD

If you suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), you likely have difficulties with sleep. You might have trouble getting to sleep, staying asleep or you may be waking up unrefreshed in the morning.

Coughing, chest pain and having to get up to urinate frequently throughout the night can be enough to keep a person from getting a comfortable night's sleep. Some COPD medications can affect your rest as well, and obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) can make it difficult to sleep well.

Get Your Symptoms Under Control

Controlling your COPD symptoms will help improve the quality of your sleep. Doing things to improve symptoms, like quitting smoking and avoiding environmental pollutants, will help keep your airways free from irritation, and using medication and therapy for rehabilitation will help minimize symptoms further, or even eliminate some of them.

Be Wary of Sleep Aids

It can be tempting to reach for the sleeping pills, but be careful with over-the-counter medications or prescription sleep aids to help with insomnia. Many can impair breathing in COPD patients. One medication that is safe for COPD patients is Ramelteon, which has been found to have no impact on breathing.

Quality and Quantity

Sleep quality is just as important as the amount of sleep you get. If you aren't getting into the REM stage of sleep, you will be tired during the day.

OSA could be stopping you from getting to this stage of sleep. If you suspect that you have apnea, or your spouse notices that you stop breathing from time to time in your sleep, talk with your doctor. You may need to use continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) therapy if you do have sleep apnea.

Other Things You Can Do

Sleep is vital for anyone who has a condition where their health is compromised. In addition to smoking cessation and other treatments mentioned, there are other ways to get a better sleep and feel rested in the morning:

- Make your bedroom cool and dark and ensure your bed is comfortable.
- Establish a routine for bedtime — go to bed and get up at the same time each day.

- Don’t use your bed for reading or other activities other than sleep and sex.
- Don’t drink anything caffeinated in the hours leading up to bedtime.
- Eat more healthy foods high in protein.
- Conserve energy by limiting activities.
- Talk to your doctor about exercises to help with sleep.
- Take naps as you need during the day, but not too close to bedtime.

Talk to your physician if you are not getting the quantity and quality of sleep you need. There are treatment options to try.

Don’t wait to get your sleep issue resolved — act now. It is important for your health.