

Alveoli - Small air sacks in the lungs where oxygen is exchanged for carbon dioxide

Ambulatory oxygen therapy - Mobile oxygen therapy. It is called 'ambulatory' because it allows you to walk around while you are using it

Anticholinergic drugs - Drugs that make breathing easier by relaxing and widening the airways. They work by binding to receptors in the lungs called M receptors

Beta-2 agonist - Drugs that make breathing easier by relaxing and widening the airways. They work by binding to beta-2 receptors in the airways

Bronchi - The two big airways that take air from the trachea, or windpipe, to the lungs. One bronchi goes to the left lung, and one to the right lung

Bronchioles - The smaller airways that take air from the bronchi to the lungs. About 24 bronchioles branch off each bronchi and go deep into the lungs, delivering air to the alveoli

Bronchitis - Inflammation of one or more of the bronchi. This is usually caused by infection

Bronchodilator - Any medicine that acts by dilating the bronchi and bronchioles

Cilia - Hair-like cells that sweep away dust and mucus from the lungs. They beat in one direction (upwards) so particles are driven up to the throat where they are swallowed or coughed out

Corticosteroid - Corticosteroid drugs work by reducing inflammation. Usually given as inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) for the long-term management of COPD. Tablet preparations are often given during acute exacerbations

Emphysema - Damage to the air sacks (alveoli) so that the walls break down, making the air sacks bigger. This makes the lungs less able to transfer oxygen to the blood to supply the rest of the body

Exacerbation - The sudden worsening of a disease or its symptoms

FEV₁ - Forced Expiratory Volume. The total amount of air that can be breathed out of the lungs in one second. See FVC (Forced Vital Capacity)

FVC - Forced Vital Capacity. This is the total amount of air that can be breathed out with maximum effort and without time constraints

Inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) - Corticosteroids that are taken using an inhaler

Long-acting bronchodilator - A bronchodilator makes breathing easier by relaxing and widening the airways. They are used to improve symptoms of breathlessness. Long-acting bronchodilators have a long duration of action and are intended for long-term treatment, compared to short-acting bronchodilators which are used to relieve symptoms as they occur

Long-term oxygen therapy - Oxygen therapy that is used regularly, over prolonged periods of time. It is usually used for around 15 hours a day

Nebulizer - A device that delivers a drug by pumping a jet of air or oxygen through a solution of the drug, to produce a fine mist. This is then breathed in through a mask

Peak Expiratory Flow (PEF) – To measure of how quickly the air can be expelled from the lungs. This measurement is carried out using a peak flow meter

Pulmonary rehabilitation - A graded exercise programme designed to improve the capacity of your lungs

Short-acting bronchodilator - Short-acting bronchodilators are used to relieve symptoms as they occur. They usually have a rapid onset of action, but last for only a short duration of time compared to the long-acting bronchodilators

Short-burst oxygen therapy - Oxygen therapy given in short bursts on occasions when people get breathless. See also long-term oxygen therapy

Somnolence - Excessive sleepiness or unnatural drowsiness. For people with COPD, it is a sign of dangerously high levels of carbon dioxide in the blood. If you experience this you should seek emergency care immediately.

Spirometer - A machine that measures how much you can breath out of your lungs, and how quickly

Wheeze - The gasping or whistling sound made when breathing becomes difficult