For millions of Americans, just taking a breath can be a strenuous task. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a group of diseases, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis, that block airflow and make breathing difficult. Smoking is the leading risk factor; exposure to indoor pollutants and respiratory infections can also contribute to COPD. People with COPD might have difficulty walking, climbing stairs, or engaging in social activities and may require use of supplementary oxygen. If you or someone you know is experiencing breathing problems, talk to your healthcare provider. Early diagnosis is key to successful treatment.

Thank you for joining us on a Minute of Health with CDC.

For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.