

Better Breathing

A publication of
Breathe California
of the Bay Area

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Have a Good Day: Tips for Dealing with the Emotional Effects of COPD

Source: WebMD, Medical News Today, Breathe California

Good days and bad days are all part of everyday life. For those who suffer from COPD and other respiratory complications, dealing with a disease can make daily life more challenging not just physically, but emotionally as well.

While eating healthy and regular exercise is important to keep the body strong, a healthy life also means taking care of your emotional health.

The difficulty of living with lung disease - constant shortness of breath, lack of energy and limitations of daily activities - can cause a patient stress and can leave them feeling depressed.

Patients who are depressed have a poorer quality of life. They experience increased

breathlessness, spend less time outdoors and are less active.

The following tips may help you have more good days:

- **Stay involved with family and friend.** Nothing feels better than spending time with people you know and love. Invite loved ones over to the house more often, especially when you know that you are feeling down.
- **Keep doing things that you enjoy.** When planning your days, make sure to include a favorite activity or anything that you might find interesting and fun.
- **Share what you learn about COPD.** Bring loved ones to

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Happy Valentine's Day!

To all of our Better Breathers Club subscribers, from all of us here at Breathe California.

Meet This Month's Better Breathers Speaker: German Blanco

German Blanco is one of our recent additions to the Breathe California staff.

A graduate of San Jose State University's Health Science Department, German has worked with other health programs such as diabetes prevention and dental health.

As a Breathe California Health Educator, he educates the community on tuberculosis and also teaches asthma management classes at schools.

His deep passion for working with the people directly makes him a great asset to any community program.

Join German at this month's meeting where he will discuss *Tuberculosis 101*.

Have a Good Day...

Continued from page 1

your doctors appointments so that they know about your situation. Let them know how they can help. Or join a support group like Breathe California's Better Breathers Club.

- **Follow your treatment plan.** Your treatment plan is there to help you deal with the disease. Knowing that you are doing all that your supposed to will help make your daily life easier.
- **Healthy Diet and Exercise.** Good nutrition and regular

exercise also contribute to feeling good emotionally. You have more energy to do what you love.

- **Take care of your emotional needs.** Talk to a healthcare provider or a therapist if you feel down most days.
- **Speak to your physician.** Share your concerns and questions with your doctor. If current treatment isn't meeting your needs, he may have other recommendations for you.

Do You Have Plans? Are They Out of Date?



Did you know that the State of California can control where your estate goes and that the State can be your beneficiary?

If you don't have your own estate plan, the State will control where your money and other assets go. This might even happen if you do have plans, but everyone named in them has predeceased you.

You may also want to see if your existing plans are obsolete. Seventy-five percent of those who have plans haven't looked at them in more than three years.

If you would like to know more about your planning options and who can help you choose the right one for you, please contact Steve French at (408) 998-5865. He can arrange for a meeting with the Breathe California planner. There is no charge for this and all discussions are confidential.

In the News

Each month, we are proud to bring you some of the latest news affecting lung disease patients. You can also find more news briefs and articles online by visiting:

www.lungsrus.org

Click on the News link from the menu bar to reach our newsroom. From there, you can view individual articles by clicking on the "News Briefs" link.

From the Newsroom, you can also read about the agency's latest work in the community. Click on the "Agency News" link to view our latest articles and press releases.

The following news briefs have been summarized from external sources and have been placed here solely to inform you of the latest in lung health news. Breathe California does not endorse their findings nor have they verified their accuracy.

COPD Carries Higher Risk for Depression than Other Diseases

Source: Reuters Health, January 21, 2009

According to a new study published in the medical journal *Chest*, researchers from the Netherlands have found that COPD patients are more likely to become clinically depressed than healthy individuals or those with another common chronic condition: diabetes.

"It seems that the increased risk of depression is not the result from having a chronic disease in general but is specific for COPD," said one of the researchers, Lisette van den Bemt from the Radboud University Nijmegen Medical Center.

In comparing 999 COPD patients, 978 diabetes patients, and 2494 matched control subjects, the risk of

an initial diagnosis of depression was "significantly higher in COPD patients." In addition, they noted that co-existing illness was prominent in COPD patients, but did not result in a higher risk for depression among patients with just COPD.

While depression has long been connected to COPD, this was the first study to suggest that the connection is much stronger than for depression and other chronic diseases. The researchers hoped that their study would encourage doctors to address depression and other emotional issues among COPD patients, particularly with the availability of different treatment options.

Study Finds that Cleaner Air Increases Life Expectancy

Source: Associated Press, January 22, 2009

According to a new study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, the steady decrease in particulate pollution over the past two decades has significantly contributed to American's increased life span.

Researchers from Brigham Young University and the Harvard School of Public Health tracked government-collected pollution data from 51 U.S. cities and compared it to changes in life expectancies. They then factored in other risks – such as smoking habits, income, migration, etc. – to determine the specific impact of air pollution on life expectancy. In the end, the researchers concluded that the drop in particulate pollution was

responsible for 4.8 months of the average 2.7 year increase in lifespan.

"This finding provides direct confirmation of the population health benefits of mitigating air pollution," Daniel Krewski, who does pollution research at the University of Ottawa in Canada, wrote in an accompanying editorial.

Furthermore, researchers found that communities which made greater progress experienced even larger increases in life expectancy. For example, it was estimated that Pittsburgh and Buffalo saw life expectancies increase by 10 months because of their significant improvements in air quality.

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Better Breathing
is a publication of:

**Breathe California
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*As the local lung
health leader, Breathe
California of the Bay
Area fights lung disease
in all its forms and works
with its communities to
promote lung health.*

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Monday, February 9th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – Palo Alto
Avenidas Senior Center, 450 Bryant Street
“Tuberculosis 101”
German Blanco, Health Educator, Breathe California

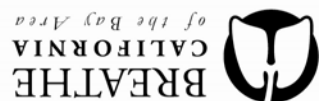
Monday, February 23rd, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm – San Jose
Breathe California Offices, 1469 Park Avenue
“Respiratory Medication: The Good, the Bad and the Misunderstood”
Susan Reddell, Registered Respiratory Specialist

A Look Ahead: Our January BBC Meetings

South County – Tuesday, March 10th, 11 am to 12:30 pm
Palo Alto – Monday, March 9th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm
San Jose – Monday, March 30th, 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

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