

A Breath of Fresh Air

A newsletter for Reliant Medical Group COPD patients and their families

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So, here we are enduring another very cold New England winter. I hope you are all staying warm and snugly indoors.

If you **have** to go out when it's cold, remember to always wear a scarf covering your mouth and nose so the air has a chance to get a little warmer before it hits your nose and lungs. Staying active this time of year is a challenge as well. One of your best options is the Senior Center in your town. These centers have different kinds of programs to get you going. Give them a call and check it out.

In this issue you will get to meet our new pulmonologist, Dr. Michael Barretti, who joined our team recently. We now have five excellent pulmonologists available to you.

This is also a good time to remind you to call our weather line when you have an appointment on a snow day and need to know if the clinic is open. The number is: **(508) 425-5696**.



For those of you who have been looking for a support group to help you deal with your COPD I recommend The Better Breathers Club. This is a program that offers you the opportunity to learn ways to better cope with COPD while getting the support of others who share in your struggles. These support groups give you the tools you need to live the best quality of life possible.

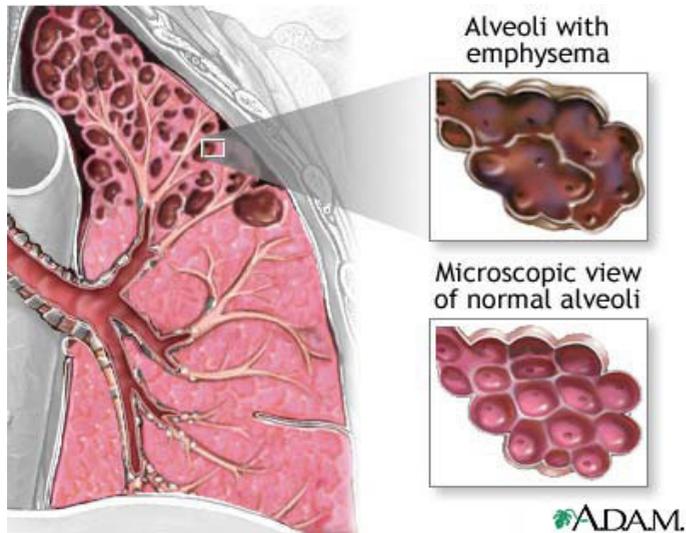
Better Breathers Clubs meet regularly and deal with a wide range of relevant topics, including:

- ✓ How COPD affects the lungs
- ✓ Breathing techniques
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Talking with your physician
- ✓ Medications and other treatment options
- ✓ Medical tests
- ✓ Supplemental oxygen
- ✓ Home health care
- ✓ Lung transplants
- ✓ Air pollution



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toxins leads to a destruction of the architecture of these alveolar segments, thus reducing the overall surface area and thereby reducing the efficiency of oxygen and carbon dioxide transport to and from the bloodstream.



While COPD is a chronic, irreversible condition, a careful combined approach between you, your primary care physician, your pulmonary doctor and your nurse care manager can minimize the long-term effects and disability too often seen with this disease. Regularly scheduled health maintenance exams as well as routine evaluation by a pulmonary professional are critical to identifying warning signs early, and preventing frequent exacerbations. Lastly, maintaining an overall healthy lifestyle that includes daily exercise and well balanced nutrition will help your body compensate for some of the symptoms of COPD. The level of exercise you should pursue should be discussed with your physician prior to starting.

Better Breathers Club

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If you feel alone and isolated, these support groups can help. It feels good to talk with others who understand, and that in turn has a positive impact on your health.

Here are two locations in our area that have monthly meetings:

- ✓ **Millbury Health Care Center –
312 Millbury Avenue, Millbury, MA.**
This group meets on the 2nd Thursday of the month from 2:00pm – 3:00pm in the dining room. For more information contact Robin Cestaro, (508) 713-4424.
- ✓ **Northboro Senior Center –
119 Bearfoot Rd, Northborough, MA.**
This group meets on the third Thursday of every month. The telephone number is (508) 393-5035.

In other news:

- We have \$10 Off coupons for Nicorette patches, gum and lozenges. Please let me know if you would like any.
- Those of you who are on oxygen, especially those of you who are not on it all the time, can benefit from a pulse oximeter that tells you if you need oxygen or not. The cheapest pulse oximeter as far as I know is available through Amazon. It costs \$22.42 and is called the CMS 50D Blue Finger pulse oximeter.
- Please remember to call Chris Andersson or myself when you end up at Saint Vincent hospital. Some insurances let us know through our computer program that you are hospitalized, but some don't. So, please call us and let us know!!
- An important reminder – please call Chris Andersson or myself if you talk to a pulmonologist or go to Urgent Care over the weekend or after hours. That way we know what has been going on with you and can follow up.