

# How COPD differs from asthma

COPD is often mistaken for other breathing problems, particularly asthma. While people with COPD may seem to have the same kind of symptoms as people with Asthma, the outlook for these two conditions and the kind of treatment you should receive is very different.

Knowing the difference can help you to work better with your doctor.

<b>Factors</b>	<b>Asthma</b>	<b>COPD</b>
Age when it starts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Typically in childhood</li><li>• Does not generally worsen with age</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Usually in later adulthood (but as soon as the early 40s)</li><li>• Worsens over time</li></ul>
Triggers/Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allergens (dust, plants, animals, etc.)</li><li>• Weather</li><li>• Heredity</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Directly linked to smoking</li><li>• Less commonly caused by inhaled fumes, pollution, dust, and chemicals</li></ul>
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Patient is often symptom free between attacks</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chronic (occur almost all the time)</li></ul>
Airflow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Usually treatment can quickly and fully restore airflow</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be partly restored by quitting smoking and taking prescribed medicines</li></ul>