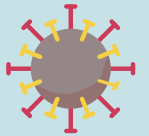
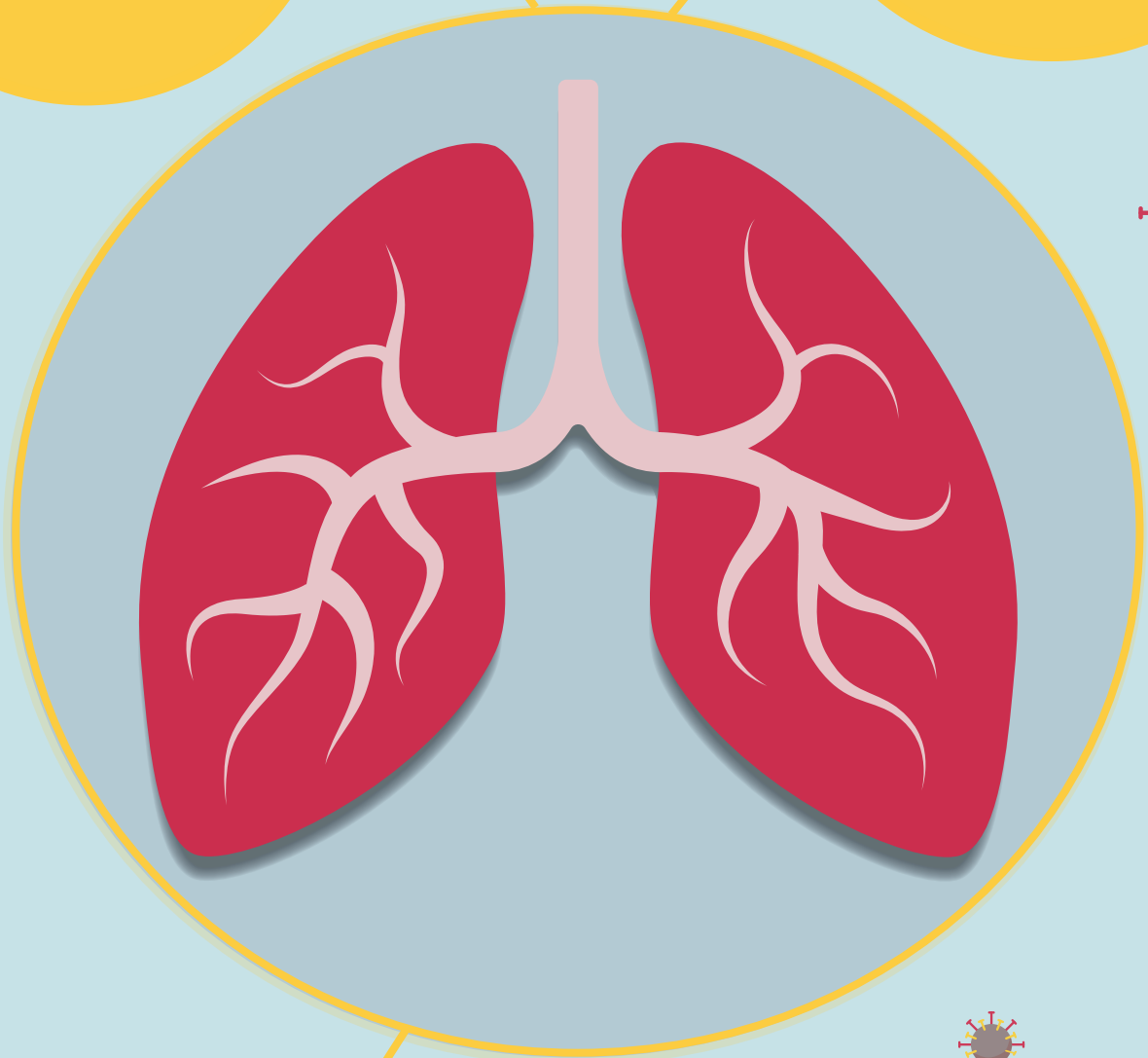


# The importance of Healthy Lungs in the fight against COVID-19

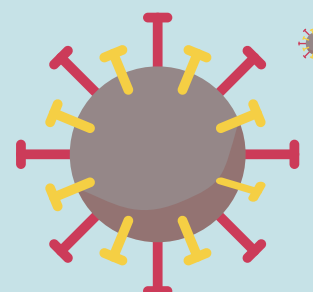


**COVID-19 targets our airways and breathing systems, so it is more important than ever to look after our lung health**

**If our lungs are working well, they are better at keeping the airways clear, removing any harmful substances**



**Our lungs defend us from harmful material we breathe in, such as pollution, tobacco or viruses like SARS-Cov-2, which causes COVID-19**



# Stopping smoking



COVID-19 symptoms can be much worse for smokers



**1.1 billion** people over the age of 14 smoke worldwide



Smoking causes airways diseases, which are a risk factor for more severe symptoms and course of COVID-19

**24h**

Quitting smoking can help your lungs to work better within 24 hours of your last cigarette



Smoking damages the lungs and makes it hard to clear out harmful substances, such as viruses and bacteria; this means that it is harder for smokers to fight off infection

# Get vaccinated

Vaccines prevent roughly 2-3 million deaths each year

Getting vaccinated can help to keep your lungs healthy.

Viruses such as flu and pneumonia can damage the airways, increasing the risk of more severe infections and other lung diseases in the future

Vaccination protects you, but also protects vulnerable people in your community. If enough people are vaccinated, it means that people who cannot have a vaccine are protected. This is called herd immunity

Once there is a vaccine for COVID-19, it is really important that as many people as possible have it to protect ourselves and other people



# Avoid air pollution



Air pollution can cause heart and lung diseases, stroke and diabetes – all of which are risk factors for severe symptoms of COVID-19



Better air quality during quarantine at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic has been linked with fewer deaths from conditions such as COPD, heart disease and stroke

CO<sub>2</sub>

Long-term exposure to poor air quality can make our lungs more vulnerable to infections



We are all responsible for improving the air we breathe. Simple actions like:

- using our cars less,
- using energy efficient devices,
- switching off sockets that are not being used, and
- using fireplaces and woodstoves less can help reduce air pollution



When exercising outside, walking, jogging, or cycling, try to choose routes with lower air pollution. This means smaller and less busy roads or a park

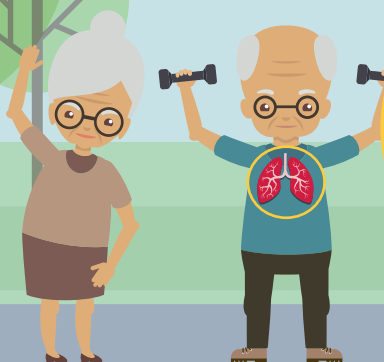
# Be physically active

Being physically active can help prevent lung disease and being fit means you can recover better and faster from any infections you do catch

Walking instead of driving your car is good for you and reduces air pollution

Keeping active, even just gently at home, can improve our immune system and make it better at fighting off viruses

Regular exercise can reduce the risk of developing heart disease, obesity and diabetes, which are risk factors for severe symptoms of COVID-19



# Top tips for keeping your lungs healthy

There has never been a more important time to quit smoking – not only for your own health but also for those around you. Contact your local quit smoking service to get the support you need and help reduce your risk of severe symptoms of COVID-19

Be aware of the pollution levels in your area – choose healthy travel options such as walking or public transport instead of your car

Improve the indoor air quality around you – stopping smoking, reducing dampness, keeping buildings ventilated and regular cleaning can all help improve the air we breathe in our homes and workspaces

Find a level of physical activity that is suitable for you – it could be running, gardening, swimming or chair-based exercises – anything that gets you moderately breathless. Keeping your activity levels up will help keep your lungs and your immune system healthy

Keep up to date with your routine vaccinations – this will reduce your risk of catching viruses and help reduce pressure on healthcare systems during the pandemic

## Sources

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Find out more at:  
[www.healthylungsforlife.org](http://www.healthylungsforlife.org)

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