



# Being lung conscious

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## Every day you take about

20,000 breaths. Each time, you take in oxygen which fuels your body and helps

repair every cell in your body. Makes sense that you should keep your lungs healthy so they can do their job keeping you alive.

The air we breathe contains mostly oxygen and nitrogen, but it also contains other things that can be bad for our lungs. Bacteria, viruses, tobacco and environmental smoke, car exhaust and other pollutants are in the air. Those with lung disease have difficulty breathing, made more difficult by these pollutants. Their breathing problems may prevent the body from getting enough oxygen.

There are things you can do to improve the health of your lungs, and their ability to do their job. (These ideas are based on an information sheet from the [BC Lung Association](#).)

First of all, don't smoke. By now that should pretty much elicit a 'duh' response, yet smoking continues to damage lungs and worse. If you don't smoke: don't start. But even if you do, stopping helps immediately. Even in older age, quitting improves your chances for longer, and better, life.

Wash your hands. That's right. Germs that can hurt your lungs travel easily and washing your hands regularly reduces your exposure to illness and disease.

Exercise. Regular aerobic effort helps develop more capacity and to maintain strong lungs. As you strengthen your lungs and breathing, you will be able to draw easier and deeper breaths. More oxygen means

more energy and makes you feel better overall.

Choose a 'safe air' route when you go out walking or running. Following high traffic streets means sucking up extra exhaust fumes and chemicals... plan ahead to avoid busy roads as much as possible.

Get some plants. Sure, we all know that trees and plants are the earth's lungs, but did you know even your houseplants can help clean the air in your home. Plants can remove chemical vapours from the air, including acetone and ammonia; and they humidify naturally, too.

Stop your idling. Waiting in the car with the engine running is not helping anyone. All you are doing is using up fuel (remember how much that last fill-up cost you?), adding to the pollution in your community, and

generally stinking things up. Just shut off the engine. Thank you.

Getting an annual flu shot is another good way to help your lungs. Aside from preventing the flu (a wonderful result, you will agree), the flu shot helps protect you against other

opportunistic infections that can take hold when your immune system is weakened by influenza.

Think of the last 20,000 breaths you took. Were you happy with every one of them? Were they difficult, or easy? What chemicals did you inhale? Every molecule in every breath goes through your lungs, so be nice to them.

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