

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) & Asthma Overlap

## WHAT IS COPD?

**A common, preventable and treatable multi-system disease characterised by:**

- Persistent respiratory symptoms
- Persistent airflow limitation
- Airway and/or alveolar abnormalities
- Usually caused by exposure to noxious particles or gases



## HOW DOES IT RELATE TO ASTHMA?

**People with features of both asthma & COPD have:**

- More frequent attacks
- Higher healthcare use
- Higher mortality
- Worse quality of life



## PREVALENCE

**20% ALSO HAVE ASTHMA**  
OF ADULTS WITH COPD (AND VICE VERSA)

## DIAGNOSIS & ASSESSMENT

**A stepwise approach is recommended that identifies disease characteristics of asthma, COPD or both**

Feature	Asthma	COPD
<b>Age of onset</b>	<20 years	>35 - 40 years
<b>Symptom pattern</b>	Variable Worse at night	Persistent
<b>Lung function</b>	Variable limitation	Persistent limitation (FEV1/ FVC <0.7)
<b>History</b>	Family history of asthma / allergy	Heavy exposure to noxious particles
<b>Time course</b>	Seasonal variation No worsening over time	Progressive worsening
<b>Chest X-ray</b>	Normal	Hyperinflation

## TREATMENT

**NOTE: Long acting beta agonists (LABAs) without ICS are not recommended for overlapping asthma & COPD**

**Options include:**

- LABA + ICS
- Long-acting muscarinic agonists (LAMAs)
- Pulmonary rehabilitation
- Add-on therapy

