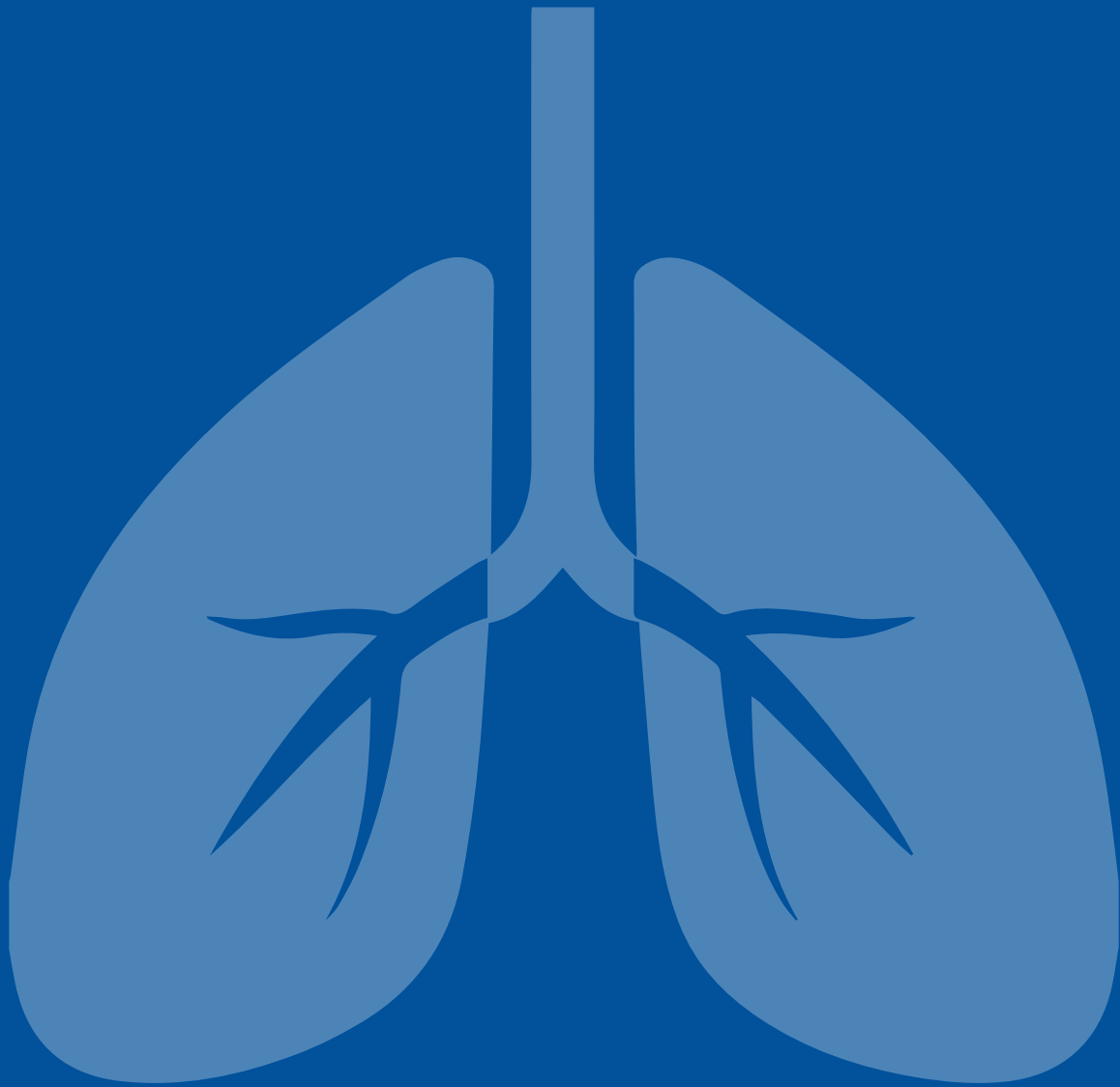


**BITESIZED**  
TEACHING



# Shortness of breath

## Shortness of breath

Shortness of breath is referred to as hyperventilation. Common causes include a cold or chest infection, being overweight, and smoking. It can also be a sign of a panic attack.

It can also be a sign of something more serious, such as a lung condition called chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) or lung cancer.



### Signs and Symptoms

- Chest feels tight and heavy
- Pain spreads to arm, back, neck and jaw
- Feeling or are going to be sick

Experiencing the above symptoms from shortness of breath indicates a possible heart attack or problem with breathing/airways. Urgent medical attention is required.

### Other signs and Symptoms needing medical review

- If shortness of breath has lasted for longer than a month
- If it gets worse when the patient has been active
- It gets worse when they lie down
- Coughing for 3 weeks or more
- Swollen ankles



### Causes

- Cold/chest infection
- Being overweight
- Smoking
- Panic/anxiety attack
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Lung cancer



### Ward Based Management

- Take physical observations of the patient
- Constantly monitor symptoms, observe for any improvements/deteriorations
- Review patient and treatment plan with the medical team
- Call the doctor