



# Atlas of Healthcare Variation | Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

## ***Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease in people aged 45 years or over***

The Atlas of Healthcare Variation is a website that uses maps, graphs, tables and descriptions that show differences in health care in Aotearoa New Zealand by both region and primary health organisation. The Atlas highlights variations in health care and the reasons why there may be differences.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a group of diseases that affect your lungs and airways, causing breathing problems.

### **What the COPD Atlas data shows**

The COPD Atlas shows how many people in a year had COPD and how many were admitted to hospital because of their COPD by region and primary health organisation. Medication use to manage COPD is also shown.

As COPD is a condition that develops as people age, only data for adults aged 45 years or over is included.

- In 2023, around 66,000 people aged 45 years or over were estimated to have COPD, with Māori having higher rates than other ethnic groups.
- Nearly 7,400 people were admitted to hospital in 2023 due to COPD. Most admissions were people aged 75, with Māori and Pacific peoples more likely to be admitted than other ethnicities.
- About half of people with COPD regularly received triple therapy (three COPD medications), and just over half of those admitted to hospital because of COPD received triple therapy in the year after their admission. This suggests there are more people with severe COPD, or who are hospitalised, that could benefit from using triple therapy to better manage their condition.
- We also found that a higher proportion of Pacific peoples and Māori aged 45 and over were being regularly dispensed reliever inhalers (blue inhaler, salbutamol) only. Reliever inhalers should only be used occasionally. Using them too often (more than four times a day or two times a week) means their COPD is not well controlled. Tell your doctor if this is happening.
- A little over half of people with COPD received their yearly, fully funded influenza vaccination. It is important to note that the influenza vaccine reduces the risk of COPD

flare ups and influenza-related hospitalisations. For more information, please see:  
[www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/resources/nz-copd-guidelines-quick-reference-guide](http://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz/resources/nz-copd-guidelines-quick-reference-guide)

## More information

- For more information on managing and living with COPD, including medication:  
[asthmafoundation.org.nz/your-health/living-with-copd/manage-your-copd](http://asthmafoundation.org.nz/your-health/living-with-copd/manage-your-copd)
- For more information about COPD including, causes, diagnosis, treatment and other resources: [healthify.nz/health-a-z/c/copd/](http://healthify.nz/health-a-z/c/copd/)

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