

Pulmonary Partners

Living Well with COPD and Other Lung Conditions

A Guide to Good Health



Patient education content courtesy of Trinity Health At Home.

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What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease or COPD?



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a lung disease characterized by chronic obstruction of the airways that makes breathing difficult. Patients typically exhibit symptoms of chronic bronchitis, emphysema, and asthma.

OVERVIEW

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a long-term chronic illness. Smoking is the leading cause of COPD; however, some smokers never develop the disease. Your symptoms will become worse and the disease will advance more quickly if you do not stop smoking.

Patients with COPD usually present with the following symptoms: productive cough that is usually worse in the morning, shortness of breath, frequent acute respiratory illnesses, and wheezing. A lung function test called spirometry is used to diagnose COPD. This measures how deeply a person can breathe and how rapidly air can move in and out of the lungs.

OUTLOOK

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease affects approximately 32 million Americans and is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. There is no cure for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). However, treatments—such as medicines and lifestyle changes can help people who have the condition live longer and more active lives. If you smoke, stopping is one of the best ways to improve your lung function and decrease the severity of your symptoms. It is important to learn about COPD, how to manage it and when to call your doctor. Partnering with your healthcare providers will help you live well with COPD.

Managing COPD is a partnership between you and your healthcare team.



Living Well With COPD



Learning to recognize the following symptoms will help you take quick action and stay healthy:

- Increased shortness of breath or other breathing problems
 - Know how to recover by using pursed lip breathing or by using your inhalers.
 - Use postures that ease breathing- support your torso and upper extremities with a back rest.
 - Recognize potential respiratory emergencies early and learn what action to take to prevent symptoms from getting worse.
- Frequent dry hacking cough or coughing up more mucus
 - Learn special coughing techniques to help remove secretions without a lot of work or distress. An example of this is deep breathing or huffing.
- Weakness or fatigue
 - You may feel tired no matter what activity you are doing. Even so, try to spread activity out throughout the day and limit doing too much at any given time.
- Trouble sleeping

If you wake up short of breath or have pain in your chest try using more pillows so you are sleeping in a more upright position

- Illness/Infection such as the flu or pneumonia
 - It is important to get your flu shot each year. You are more prone to getting the flu because of your lung condition. If you get the flu, you will be sicker and the infection will last longer. Getting vaccinated for pneumonia is also a wise decision when you have COPD.

Your Medicine is Important



- Keep a list of your medicines:
 - Include: name, dose and how many times a day you take each one
 - Include over the counter medicines, vitamins, herbal remedies and supplements
 - Keep a copy of the list in your wallet or purse
 - Don't forget to update the list if your medicines change
 - Take this list with you to every doctor appointment
- Know WHEN and HOW to take your medicines. Be sure to follow the instructions given to you by your doctor or pharmacist. If you do not understand, ASK for more information
- Be aware of possible side effects of your medicine. If you experience any side effects, tell your doctor
- Use a pillbox---this prevents you from missing a dose or taking a double dose. This will help you take the right dose of medicines at the right time
- Take only the dose of medicine prescribed for you by your doctor at the same time every day, even if you feel fine! Do not take more or less without first talking with your doctor
- Talk to your doctor before starting a new over-the-counter medicine, vitamin or supplement
- If you forget to take your medicine, do not try to catch up by taking more than one dose at a time. If two or more doses are missed, call your pharmacist or doctor for instructions to get back on schedule
- Reorder medicines when you are down to a one-week supply
- Store your medicines safely and keep them out of reach of children and pets. Medicines should be stored in a cool dry place and out of direct sunlight



Medication and Lifestyle



1. Sometimes I forget to take my medicine	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Sometimes I run out of my medicine	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. Sometimes I skipped or stopped taking a medicine because I didn't think it was working	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Sometimes I skipped or stopped taking a medicine because of how it made me feel	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. Sometimes I stopped taking a medicine(s) because of the cost	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. Sometimes I skipped or stopped taking a medicine because I was concerned about becoming addicted to the medicine	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. Sometimes I skipped doses, or stopped taking a medicine because I had to take the medicine too often during the day	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. Sometimes I stopped taking the medicine because the strength or how often to take the medicine kept changing	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. Sometimes I stopped taking a medicine because I didn't know the purpose of the medicine	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Commonly Prescribed Medicines for COPD



- BRONCHODILATORS**
Short Acting: Ease symptoms-First line (examples: albuterol, atrovent, xopenex, ventolin, proventil)
- Used for patients who have symptoms that are intermittent
 - Works by widening the airways
- Long Acting: Help prevent breathing problems (examples: advair, brovana, performist, spiriva, symbicort)**
- Used for patients who have symptoms that are intermittent
 - Works by widening the airways
- CORTICOSTEROIDS (examples: prednisone, aerobid, azmacort, flovent, pulmicort)**
- Used to help prevent exacerbations
 - Available in pill and inhaled form
 - Frequently used if you also have asthma
- PHOSPHODIESTERASE-4 (PDE4) (example: daliresp)**
- Taken daily to help prevent exacerbations

ASK YOUR PHYSICIAN ABOUT RECEIVING THE PNEUMOCOCCAL AND FLU VACCINES

- USING INHALERS**
- It may take some time after starting an inhaler before you notice your symptoms improving
 - Metered-dose inhalers (MDIs) and nebulizers are equally effective in treating COPD
 - MDIs are easier to carry (nebulizers generally need to be plugged in)
 - If you feel more short of breath than usual modify your activity level and ask for help to complete your daily tasks

Managing Inhalers



You can breathe in medicine to help manage your breathlessness and help you perform activity longer and with more ease. Below are some examples.

AEROSOLS OR INHALERS

- These are hand-held devices that deliver medication in aerosol form so it can be inhaled directly into the lungs
- If you cannot use a particular device, another one will be tried
- It is important that you learn how to use your inhaler correctly to ensure you receive the entire metered dose of medication
- Clean the canister and cap daily under warm running water. Dry completely before putting back together
- Clean two times per week with mild soap and warm water. Rinse and dry completely before putting back together

SPACER OR HOLDING CHAMBER

- Spacers attach to your metered dose inhaler so you can inhale the medicine in one or two slow breaths
- Eliminates the need to correctly time your inhale with the release of your medicines
- Reduces the risk of the side effects related to the steroid inhalers such as thrush (yeast infection of the mouth) and hoarseness
- Clean weekly with mild soap and warm water. Take apart and soak for 15 minutes. Rinse well and dry completely before putting back together

NEBULIZERS

- This is a device where a drug is broken down into fine particles so it can be inhaled. It may be driven by compressed oxygen or air.
- You or your caregivers will need to be trained how to use this type of therapy and how to take care of the equipment
- You will use either a facemask or a mouthpiece as one type may work better for you
- Follow the manufacturer's cleaning instructions

**NEVER SHARE YOUR PERSONAL MEDICAL DEVICES
WITH SOMEONE ELSE!**

Oxygen Safety



Your physician may have prescribed oxygen for you. Oxygen is a drug and is an effective treatment for many people living with COPD. It is helpful and safe ONLY when used as prescribed by your physician. Oxygen is combustible and can be a fire hazard if not handled properly!

- DO NOT smoke or allow smoking in your home if you are using oxygen
- Place NO SMOKING signs on the outside of entry doors to your home and in every room where oxygen is being used
- Be sure you have working fire extinguishers and smoke detectors in your home
- Have an evacuation route for you and your family in case of a fire
- DO NOT use petroleum jelly based ointments (vaseline, chapstick) in or around your nose if you are using oxygen
- Keep all oxygen at least 15 FEET from any open flame such as a stove, barbeque, fireplace, match, candle, etc
- DO NOT store oxygen in an enclosed space such as a closet
- Store oxygen tanks standing upright or flat on the floor. Keep them secured and do not allow them to fall
- DO NOT use electric razors, hair dryers, electric toys or other items that could produce sparks near your oxygen
- Keep your oxygen tubing contained to avoid tripping hazards



Diet & Nutrition



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR DIET

- Drink at least 6-8 eight ounce glasses of non-caffeinated fluids every day
- Eat high fiber foods such as vegetables, fruits and beans
- Drink liquids after finishing your meal. This will ensure you get in your nutrition prior to feeling full

WHAT TO AVOID IN YOUR DIET

- Avoid anything that causes gas such as: carbonated beverages, fried foods, apples, broccoli, cabbage, cucumbers or onions
- Avoid overeating
- Avoid foods with more than 300 mg of sodium (salt) per serving. Learn to read food labels
- 4 ways to reduce the amount of sodium:
 - Stop adding salt to food
 - Pick foods naturally low in sodium
 - Limit canned, processed or cured foods
 - Try other seasonings to add flavor such as lemon juice, onion or garlic powder, or herbs

TIPS FOR MEALS

- Choose meals that are easy to prepare and save your energy for eating
- Enlist help from family and friends with grocery shopping and meal preparation
- Eat smaller more frequent meals, rather than three large meals a day
- Keep foods and snacks within sight and easy reach
- Take small bites and chew slowly

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 g	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from fat 10
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 4%	4%
Saturated Fat 1.5%	4%
Trans Fat	
Cholesterol 50mg	28%
Sodium 150mg	15%
Total Carbohydrate 10g	3%
Dietary Fiber 5g	
Sugars 3g	
Protein 16%	
Vitamin A 1%	Vitamin C 3%
Calcium 2%	Iron 2%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	

Weather & Air Quality



You may find it harder to breathe when the weather changes, especially during very cold or very warm weather. Follow the tips below for easier breathing when the climate changes.

HOT WEATHER

- Go outside when it is cooler - earlier in the morning or later in the evening
- If possible, stay indoors in air-conditioning. If you don't have air-conditioning, go to the mall, library, movie theater or community center
- Avoid over-exerting yourself or outside exercise on hot days

COLD WEATHER

- If outside exercise is difficult, maintain a daily indoor exercise routine
- Wear a scarf or mask over your face when outside. Breathe through your nose to warm the air you are breathing
- If you use oxygen, keep your tubing under your clothes to warm the air
- Wear layers of loose clothing
- Limit your exposure to the cold as much as possible
- Stay away from people you know are ill. If you are out in a crowd, wear a mask and practice good hand-washing. Allergens and certain chemicals or substances can irritate your lungs and increase airway inflammation. Be aware of these and limit exposure when possible.

COMMON ALLERGENS

Mold, pollen, dust and animal dander

IRRITANTS

Smoke, air pollution, chemicals (exhaust, paint, perfume, etc.), aerosol can products (hairspray) and household cleaners

PREVENTION

- Don't smoke and stay away from those who are smoking
- Use recommended protective equipment on the job
- Use an air filter in your furnace and change per manufacturer's guidelines
- Vacuum carpets at least weekly and change bed linens weekly and launder in hot water
- Stay indoors when outside air quality is poor

Take Control of Your Cough



There are many ways you can take control and improve the function of your lungs. Coughing is your body's main way to remove mucus from the lungs, but this can leave you exhausted. Below is one of the best ways to help you clear mucus and not tire out.

HUFF COUGHING

- Take a medium-sized breath in and tighten your stomach muscles
- Hold the breath for 2 to 3 seconds
- Unlike coughing, keep your throat open while doing this
- Force a “who” out through your mouth in one quick burst of air
- Longer exhalations help to clear smaller airways
- Shorter exhalations help to clear larger airways
- Practice both long and short exhalations

HOW OFTEN TO PERFORM

- Never do this to the point of exhaustion
- Perform 1 or 2 huff breaths
- Take a rest in between for 5 to 10 breaths
- Cough when you feel the mucus collected in your throat
- Try to do 3 to 5 cycles of huffing and resting

OTHER TREATMENT

You may also be taught how to use certain devices to either breathe in or out against resistance. Your doctor and healthcare team will work with you on this as needed.

Managing Your Breathing



PURSED LIP BREATHING

This is one of the simplest ways to control your breathing. This technique keeps the airways open longer. Shortness of breath and the overall work of breathing are reduced.

WHEN TO PERFORM THIS TECHNIQUE

- During the difficult part of any activity (bending, lifting, etc.)
- To recover more quickly once the effort is over.

HOW TO PERFORM PURSED LIP BREATHING

- Breathe in slowly through your nose for 2 counts, keeping your mouth closed
- Pucker or “purse” your lips in a whistling position and breathe out slowly for 4 counts
- Use enough pressure to make a sound but do not force exhaling
- Stay relaxed and exhale at least twice as long as when you inhale

LUNG EXPANSION EXERCISES FOR BREATHING

Upper Chest Breathing Place one hand on your upper chest. Concentrate on bringing air into the lung space below your hand. Blow out gently and slowly.

Mid Chest Breathing Place your hands on each side of your rib cage. Concentrate on moving your rib cage out against your hands as you breathe in. Focus on breathing into the painful area around your rib cage. Blow out slowly and gently.



Relaxation and Controlled Breathing



Because breathing can be hard work it is important to learn how to relax while breathing. You should do these breathing exercises in a comfortable position. Start out by relaxing your neck and shoulders. You may want to place your arms on a table and lean forward or sit supported and lean back.

COUNTING WITH BREATHING

- Count “one out” as you breathe out and “one in” as you breathe in
- Do this pattern at your own pace
- This should slow down once you have control
- To help you use the right part of your lungs remember: tummy out with breathing in, tummy in with breathing out. Later on when you can do the counting well you may progress to:
- “1, 2 out” then “1 in” and...
- “1, 2, 3 out” and “1, 2 in”

You can combine this breathing while performing activity (remember: exhale with effort). For example, here is how to use while climbing stairs.

- Stand at the bottom of the stairs with feet flat and body upright
- Inhale through your nose counting “1, 2 in”
- Exhale slowly through pursed lips while walking up the stairs, counting out “1, 2, 3, out”
- Stop and rest at the end of exhalation
- Inhale again counting “1, 2 in”
- Exhale and count out while continuing to climb the stairs
- Rest at the top of the stairs

Rating of Perceived Dyspnea



The Rating of Perceived Dyspnea (RPD) scale is used to measure the level of dyspnea or how difficult you feel it is to breathe. The numbers (0-10) relate to phrases used to describe how easy or difficult your breathing is.

In most cases, you should be doing activities at a level that feels 3 (moderate) up to 5 (severe). If breathing difficulty is rated 7 or higher, STOP AND REST before continuing activity.

RATING	DESCRIPTION
0	NOTHING
0.5	VERY, VERY LIGHT
1	VERY LIGHT
2	LIGHT
3	MODERATE
4	SOMEWHAT HARD
5	HARD
6	
7	VERY HARD
8	
9	VERY, VERY HARD
10	MAXIMAL

If you are having more shortness of breath than usual for an activity, notify your health care provider.

Rating of Perceived Exertion



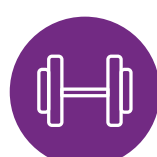
The Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale is used to measure the intensity of your activities. The numbers (0-10) relate to phrases used to describe how easy or difficult you find an activity. For example, 0.5 (very, very light) would be how you feel when sitting in a chair; a rating of 10 (maximal) would be how you feel when you are putting forth the most effort you can possibly give.

In most cases, you should be doing activities at a level that feels 3 (moderate) to 4 (somewhat hard).

RATING	DESCRIPTION
0	NOTHING
0.5	VERY, VERY LIGHT
1	VERY LIGHT
2	LIGHT
3	MODERATE
4	SOMEWHAT HARD
5	HARD
6	
7	VERY HARD
8	
9	VERY, VERY HARD
10	MAXIMAL

If your level of exertion is higher than usual for an activity, notify your health care provider.

Exercise and Activity



Staying active can improve your physical condition and make your breathing easier.

TIPS AND GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVITY

- The key to becoming more active is to begin gradually
- Wear walking shoes that have good support and fit comfortably
- Always warm up (walk for a few minutes) and cool down (slowly decrease the intensity of the activity)
- Never hold your breath when exercising
- Don’t exercise on an empty or full stomach. Wait one hour after light meals
- Avoid outdoor activity when below 40° F or warmer than 80° F

QUANTITY AND INTENSITY OF EXERCISE

- You should never become short of breath when doing exercise
- While exercising you should be able to carry on a conversation
- The day after you are more active, you may feel more tired than usual
- When doing a strengthening exercise, you should not have to strain
- Coordinate your breathing with your exercises (remember: exhale with effort)
- A long term goal is to work up to 30 minutes of activity daily. This can be broken down into three sessions of 10 minutes of activity or exercise. In the beginning you may only be able to tolerate a few minutes of exercise at a time. You can gradually increase how long and how often you perform activity

STRETCHING

- Always stretch when your muscles are warm such as after you have been active and moved around a little while
- Never stretch to the point of pain
- Certain stretches, performed regularly, can help your breathing

EXAMPLES OF STRETCHES

- Sitting- trunk bending sideways
- Sitting- shoulder circles backwards
- Sitting- trunk bending forwards while breathing out and trunk raising while breathing in
- Hook-lying (knees bent lying flat)- knees rolling side to side

YOUR THERAPIST WILL SELECT EXERCISES AND STRETCHES TAILORED FOR YOU.

SIGNS OF OVEREXERTION

- Shortness of breath that does not get better when you decrease or stop the activity
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Chest pain, fullness or tightness
- Pain in your arms, shoulders, neck or jaw
- Irregular or racing heart rate (pulse)
- Unusual or extreme fatigue
- Severe sweating
- Nausea and/or vomiting

Keep track of your symptoms. If symptoms persist—let your health care provider and/or doctor know. If you have any of these symptoms while being active, slow down. If the symptoms do not get better, stop the activity.

CALL 911 IF YOUR CHEST PAIN OR OTHER SERIOUS SYMPTOMS ARE NOT RELIEVED.

Conserving Your Energy



PLAN AHEAD

- Spread tasks evenly over the day or week
- Delegate tasks to others and accept offers of help from family and friends
- Plan to do harder tasks after resting or spaced between easier ones

BALANCE ACTIVITY & REST

- Take a rest break before you get tired - you will recover more quickly
- Plan when to take a rest break before you start an activity
- Work at a slower pace to sustain your energy over time

ALTER THE TASK

- Sit rather than stand whenever possible
- Break the task up into smaller parts and rest in between
- Simplify - cook quick meals and/or buy prepared meals, buy wrinkle-free clothing, use a dust mop that has been dampened with cleaner, etc

ADAPT THE ENVIRONMENT

- Place items used frequently in easy-to-reach places
- Have supplies handy in more than one place to save trips
- Store items between waist and chest level for optimal work zone

EQUIPMENT

- Use long-handled equipment to reduce bending over or reaching up
- A shower chair or bench can allow you to rest while taking a shower
- Use a crock-pot, microwave, food processor, etc. for meal preparation

TIPS FOR YOU ON CONSERVING ENERGY

Making the Most of Your Doctor Appointment



PREPARE FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Bring a current list of all your medicine to every appointment
- Write down a list of things you want to talk to your doctor about—take this with you

DURING YOUR APPOINTMENT

- Write down your doctor's instructions. This will help you remember what was said once you get home
- If you do not understand, ask your doctor to repeat what he has said until you understand
- Let your doctor know:
 - What your concerns/fears are—so they can be addressed
 - If you are having difficulty taking your medicines or following any other instructions
 - Even if you think something is minor—it might be important

REMEMBER—staying well is a partnership between you and your health care team. Keeping you healthy and in your home is **EVERYONE'S #1 GOAL.**



Tips to Stop Smoking



PREPARING TO STOP

- Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do to protect your health
- Pick a date and make plans to stop smoking. **Half the job of quitting is making the decision to quit!**
- Review past attempts to quit—What helped? What led to relapse?
- Anticipate difficulties and plan ahead on how to overcome them
- Ask your doctor about using over-the-counter nicotine patches or gum, or get a prescription for an inhaler

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- Avoid acidic foods (tomatoes, citrus) that increase the urge to smoke
- Avoid drinking alcohol – it may trigger you to smoke
- Snack on low calorie snacks, such as celery, apples
- After you eat, brush your teeth or sip mint tea to avoid the urge to smoke
- Total abstinence is a must – even one puff will set you back
- Ask your friends and family to keep on encouraging you to quit
- Relax! Remember the urge to smoke will pass. QUITTING is the goal

RESOURCES

Toll-free National Quitline: 1-800-QUIT NOW



My Action Plan



MY GOAL

HOW IMPORTANT IS THIS GOAL TO YOU?

“How important would you say it is for you to _____?”

On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all important and 10 is extremely important, where would you say you are?” Mark on the ruler below.



HOW CONFIDENT ARE YOU THAT YOU CAN DO THIS?

“How confident would you say you are that if you decided to _____ you could do it?” On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 is not at all confident and 10 is extremely confident, where would you say you are?” Mark on the ruler below.



WHAT DIFFICULTIES TO REACHING YOUR GOAL ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT?

Are You At Risk for Going Back to the Hospital?



Name _____ Date _____

My Goal _____

CHECK ALL BOXES THAT ARE TRUE FOR YOU

☐ I have trouble getting to my doctor’s appointments	☐ I fell down in the last year
☐ I have been in the hospital or emergency room in the past year	☐ I live alone
☐ I have heart problems/weak heart	☐ When I don’t feel well or get anxious I go to the Emergency Room
☐ I have diabetes	☐ I have three or more health problems
☐ I often have shortness of breath	They are: _____
☐ I often feel down or discouraged, or depressed	_____
☐ I sometimes get mixed up or confused	
☐ My health is not as good as I would like	
☐ I need help with my pills/medicines	
☐ I need help using my inhalers	

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY

I have a: ☐ skin sore: ☐ skin ulcer

☐ pressure sore on my body, legs, or feet

I need some help every day to:

☐ dress ☐ take a bath ☐ cook

TO STAY OUT OF THE HOSPITAL OR EMERGENCY ROOM, I WILL...

☐ Check my ZONE every day and take action if NOT in the GREEN	☐ I will call my healthcare provider if I have questions	☐ I will take my medicine every day
---	---	--

To stay out of the hospital, I will also: _____

I need help with _____

Patient signature _____ Date _____

Clinician signature _____ Date _____

When to Call Your Doctor About Heart Failure



Your doctor wants you to report changes in how you feel. Treating symptoms early can keep you at home and prevent you from going to the hospital.

“My name is _____ and I have COPD. I am not feeling well. The doctor told me to call him when I have changes in how I feel.”

USE THIS CHECKLIST TO HELP EXPLAIN HOW YOU FEEL

☐ I wake up at night with difficulty breathing.
☐ I use more pillows than usual when I sleep or I have to sleep in a chair sitting-up because it is difficult to breathe.
☐ I get short of breath even when sitting.
☐ I am coughing more often/I am coughing up more mucus.
☐ My mucus is yellow or green.
☐ I have been running a fever.
☐ I have swelling, or more than usual swelling in my feet, hands or abdomen.

If you also have a heart condition that you take water pills for and have gained more than 2-3 pounds in 24 hours or 4-5 pounds in 1 week ask:

☐ Should I take an extra water pill for 1-2 days because I am more short of breath or have an unexpected weight gain?
☐ Are there any other changes I should make with my medicine?

It is important to let your doctor know:

☐ If you have not been taking all of your medicine.
☐ If you have seen another doctor and he/she changed any of your medicine.

Ask when someone will call you back with instructions. If you don’t hear back from the doctor’s office within 3 hours, call the office again.

CALL
911

CALL 911 IF YOU CANNOT BREATHE, HAVE CHEST PAIN THAT WILL NOT GO AWAY OR YOUR SYMPTOMS GET WORSE

Self Management Plan: COPD



Use this guide to help you associate changes in how you feel with how you should manage your COPD or other respiratory disease.



Green Zone: All Clear

- No cough, wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath during the day or night
- No need to use your rescue inhalers
- You were able to maintain normal activities

Green Zone Means:

- Your symptoms are under control
- Continue taking your medicine as ordered
- Follow your low salt diet as instructed
- Keep all doctor appointments



Yellow Zone: Caution

- Amount of sputum (phlegm) increases, becomes thicker, or color changes to yellow, green or rust
- Increased cough or wheezing even after taking medicines
- Increased swelling of ankles or feet
- Increased shortness of breath from usual level
- Fever of 100.5 oral or 99.5 under arm
- Other unusual symptoms

Yellow Zone Means:

- Follow up with your doctor is needed!
- Your symptoms may indicate that you need adjustment of your medicine or other medical help

Please contact your doctor TODAY to report these serious symptoms

Doctor Name: _____

Number: _____

Instructions: _____



Red Zone: Medical Alert/DANGER

- Wheezing
- Tightness in your chest when you take a deep breath or cough
- Beginning irregular heart beat

Red Zone Means:

- Call your doctor IMMEDIATELY



DANGER ZONE

Unrelieved shortness of breath • Unrelieved chest pain • Significant mental changes • Blue nail beds or lips • Unable to stay awake

Discharge Plan



- ☐ Keep your list of medicines updated. Take this list to all doctor Appointments.
- ☐ Don't miss any of your doctor's appointments. Use a calendar to keep track of appointments.

Your next appointment is: _____ With Dr. _____

- ☐ Use this booklet and your Health Management Plan to stay healthy.
- ☐ Follow your breathing instructions and activity guidelines.
- ☐ Follow your home exercise program.
- ☐ Begin Pulmonary Rehabilitation/Outpatient Therapy as directed by your physician.
- ☐ Notify your doctor about changes to your health:
 - ___ Increased shortness of breath
 - ___ Fever develops
 - ___ Increased cough (more often or coughing more up)
 - ___ Change in color of sputum (phlegm)

Other instructions: _____

Thank you for the opportunity to be your healthcare partner. We wish you well in achieving your health goals.

[illegible][illegible]

Call Your Nurse First



We can help you manage your health symptoms and avoid hospitalization if you call your Nurse first.

