

Living Well with COPD



Important Phone Numbers	
Name	Phone Number
Primary Doctor	
Specialist	
Specialist	
Pharmacy	
Pharmacy	
Emergency Contact	
Emergency Contact	

What is COPD?

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a lung condition that makes it hard to breathe (dyspnea). It is difficult to get air into and out of your lungs, and your airways may lose their ability to stretch. There are two types of COPD, **chronic bronchitis** and **emphysema**. Most people with COPD have both emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

Chronic Bronchitis is a constant irritation and swelling of the lining of the airways. It is dangerous and can lead to a lung infection.

Emphysema occurs when the air sacs in your lungs are destroyed. Less air is able to get into your lungs. Air also has a hard time leaving your lungs. This makes you short of breath.

Chronic means this disease lasts a long time and is always present. You can control it, but it is not going away.

Obstructive means the airways are blocked. This happens because of swelling or extra mucus in the airways.

Pulmonary means the lungs.

Disease refers to the damage that has happened in the lungs.

Living with COPD

Although COPD is a serious illness it can be controlled with good health habits, diet, breathing exercises, and changes in your environment.

Causes of COPD

Cigarette smoking
Second hand smoke

Lung infection
Jobs with dust or fumes

Family genes
Air pollution



Things You Can Do to Live Well with COPD

Take your medicine
Practice good hygiene

Do not smoke
Get plenty of sleep

Clear your mucus
Avoid sick people

Save energy and breathe easy
Avoid dust and strong smell

About Your Medicines

COPD can be controlled with medicine. Your doctor will decide what works best for you. Medications will help relieve your symptoms. Always take your medicine exactly as ordered.

- Take each of your medicines, every day, at the right times.
- Do not skip doses of your medicines, even when you feel good.
- If you think you are having side effects from your medicines, don't stop taking them. Talk to your doctor right away.
- If you are having trouble paying for your medicine, talk to your doctor.



My Regular Treatment is:

Medicine	Dose	Pills/Puffs	Time

Check the box next to the COPD medicine you are taking.

☐ **Bronchodilators (brong-koh-dahy-ley-ter)**

Helps to open narrowed air passages in your lungs. This medicine can work two different ways:

Quick relief (or short-acting) are inhaled to control sudden symptoms. This is often called a “rescue inhaler.”

It acts fast to:

- Relax the airways
- Open up the airways
- Help clear mucus
- Prevent wheezing when you exercise

Long-acting are used to control the swelling in your lungs.

☐ **Corticosteroids (kawr-tuh-koh-ster-oids)**

Helps reduce the swelling in your lungs and air passages. It may help prevent wheezing and shortness of breath. It is important to take this medicine exactly as ordered. Never stop taking them all at once. They must be stopped slowly.

☐ **Expectorants (ik-spek-ter-uh nt)**

Helps to loosen mucus in your lungs so you can breathe better. This medicine may also be called a mucolytic (myoo-kuh-lit-ik).

☐ **Antitussives (an-tee-tuhs-ivs)**

Helps to control your cough so you can get more rest.

☐ **Antibiotics (an-ti-bahy-ot-iks)**

Fight infections. Your doctor will want you to start taking it at the first sign of a lung infection. Make sure you take all of the pills until they are gone- even if you feel better.

☐ **Antihistamines (an-ti-his-tuh-meens)**

Helps to relieve or prevent allergy symptoms.

Metered-Dose Inhaler (MDI)

MDIs also called inhalers or puffers, are the most common device used to take your inhaled medicine. You should keep one with you at all times.

- They are small enough to be carried in your pocket.
- You can use them with a spacer or in a closed mouth way.
- Check the box of the MDI that you use:

- ☐ Advair®
- ☐ Atrovent®
- ☐ Combivent®
- ☐ Flovent®
- ☐ Ventolin®
- ☐ Serevent®



Keep Your MDI Inhaler Clean

Look at the hole where the medicine sprays out from your inhaler. If you see “powder” in the hole, clean the inhaler.

1. Remove the metal canister from the L-shaped mouthpiece
2. Rinse the mouthpiece and cap in warm water
3. Dry overnight

Keep Track of When to Replace

1. How many puffs does your canister hold?

2. How many puffs do you take each day?

3. Divide #1 (puffs in canister) / by #2
(puffs per day) = _____



The result is the number of days your canister should last. Put this date on your canister. On your calendar, put a note one week before this date to remind you to get a refill. If you can, keep an extra canister in case the one you are using is empty.

Use and Care of a Nebulizer

Your doctor may have asked you to use a special medicine in a nebulizer to help you breathe better. A nebulizer takes liquid medicine and turns it into a fine mist. This lets your lungs absorb the medicine you breathe.

How to Use

If your medicine is pre-mixed, put it into the nebulizer cup. **Go to Step 1.**

If you mix your medicine, measure the correct amount of normal saline solution using a clean eyedropper and put it into the cup. Then, measure the correct amount of medicine using a clean eyedropper and put it into the cup with the saline. **Go to Step 1.**

Steps:

1. Fasten the mouthpiece to the T-shaped part then fasten this to the cup.
If you have a mask, fasten it to the cup.
2. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth. Seal your lips tightly around it. If you have a mask, put the mask over your mouth.
3. Turn on the air compressor machine.
4. Take slow, deep breaths in through your mouth.
Hold each breath for one to two seconds before breathing out.
5. Continue until the medicine is gone from the cup (about 10 minutes).
6. Store your medicine as directed.

Keep Your Nebulizer Clean

It is important to keep your nebulizer clean and prevent it from clogging up. It will last longer. A dirty nebulizer may cause infections. Clean using mild soap and hot water.



How to Save Energy and Breathe Easy

Many people with heart or lung conditions get tired very easily. Follow these suggestions to help you feel your best.

Save energy:

- Plan your activities
- Rest four to five times a day
- Do not be afraid to ask for help
- Wait for one hour after meals to do activities
- Sit on a stool when showering, shaving, preparing meals, etc.

Breathing Easier

Use these positions if you get short of breath:

Sitting

- Rest your feet flat on the floor
- Lean your chest slightly forward
- Rest your elbows on your knees or rest your chin on your hands
- You may also rest your arms on a table or your head on some pillows

Sleeping

- Lie on your side with a pillow between your legs and elevate your head with pillows
- Lie on your side with three or four pillows beneath you

Standing

- Stand and lean forward, resting your arms on the back of a chair
- Lean the lower half of your back against a wall, with your feet 12 inches in front



Breathing Exercises

Do these exercises three to four times a day for five to 10 minutes.

Pursed Lip Breathing

Breathing this way uses less energy and helps you get more air in your lungs.

1. Breathe in and slowly through your nose for one count.
2. Purse your lips like you are going to whistle.
3. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips for two counts. Let air come out on its own. Do not force it out.

STOP if you feel dizzy. Slow down your breathing.

Breathing from Your Diaphragm

Using the muscle below your ribs to help you breathe can help get more air into your lungs.

1. Put one hand on your upper chest and one on your stomach.
2. Breathe in slowly through your nose. You should feel the hand on your stomach moving out. The hand on your chest should not move.
3. Breathe out slowly through your pursed lips. You should feel the hand on your stomach move in as you breathe out.



Coughing and Deep Breathing

Sit up in a chair with one hand on your upper chest, the other below your ribs.

1. Breathe in slowly through your nose pushing your stomach out against your hand. The hand on your chest should remain still.
2. Hold your breath for two seconds.
3. Cough two to three times. Use your stomach muscles to help you cough.
4. Check the color of any mucus you cough up. If it is yellow, green, bloody, or has an odor, call your doctor.

Eating Easy, Eating Right

Someone with COPD may need 10 times more energy to breathe than someone without COPD. Eating a large meal can leave you feeling too full and make it harder to breathe. Try to eat four to six small meals a day.

- Eat your main meal early in the day
- Pick foods high in protein
- Choose from all food groups
- Eat foods that are easy to chew and swallow
- Avoid high sugar foods. They make you tired
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine. They make your heart work harder and you may become more short of breath

Avoid foods that produce gas. Gas causes your abdomen to expand. Your lungs then have less room to inflate. This can make it harder to breathe. Avoid things like cabbage, beans and carbonated drinks.

Drink enough fluids. This is important to help thin the mucus in your lungs and will make it easier to cough. Eight to 12 cups of caffeine-free liquids per day is suggested. Drinking plain water may be best. **Caution:** Talk to your doctor if you have heart problems like CHF or Heart Failure as well as COPD. Sometimes it's necessary for people with heart problems to limit their fluid intake.

Avoid milk and chocolate. These foods can cause you to have more or thicker mucus and make it harder to breathe.

Exercise and Activity

The type and amount of activity that is right for you will vary if you have mild, moderate, severe or very severe COPD. Pace yourself and take frequent rest breaks. Check with your doctor before starting any exercise program.

Prepare for Exercise

If you are using an inhaler, use it before your exercise time. This will make it easier for your lungs.

Live Healthier with Exercise

Without some exercise, your muscles can weaken. This will make breathing more difficult. Walk and stay active!

Follow these tips:

- Take it slow
- Stop and rest when you feel short of breath
- Pick a place to walk that you enjoy
- Ask a friend or someone in your family to join you
- Go out when you feel your best
- Ask your doctor for tips on exercise

Stop immediately if you have chest pain!



Things to Avoid

Some things can make your COPD worse. They may make your airways become red and swollen. Try to avoid:

Cigarette Smoke

Avoid second-hand smoke. If you smoke, please stop! Quitting is the most important thing you can do to improve your breathing and help COPD from getting worse. For more information on upcoming classes, call (269) 927-5403 or email smokefreelife@lakelandhealth.org

Indoor Pollutants

- Aerosol sprays
- Cleaning products
- Dirty filters
- Dust
- Perfume or powder
- Strong odors

Emotions

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Stress

Weather

- Extreme heat and cold
- Humidity
- Wind

Outdoor Pollutants

- Exhaust fumes
- Smoke from burning leaves
- Pollen
- Smog



Managing Your Symptoms

Clearing Your Mucus

Moist air can help loosen your mucus so you can cough it up easier. It is important to keep your airways free of excess mucus.

To help clear your mucus

1. Turn your shower on hot
2. Let the bathroom fill with steam
3. Sit in the bathroom for 10-15 minutes
4. Do your coughing and deep breathing exercises

It is important to watch for changes in your mucus. It can mean that you are getting a lung infection (pneumonia).

Call Your Doctor If

- Your sputum is thicker or stickier
- You have green, yellow, or brown sputum for more than 12 hours
- You have a fever greater than 100°F for more than 24 hours

Signs of Worsening COPD

A flare up can start very quickly. It is important to know the signs and to take your rescue inhaler right away.

Signs that your COPD is worsening may include:

- More coughing
- Shortness of breath with activity
- Increased mucus
- Wheezing

This is when you should use your fast-acting inhaler!

A rescue inhaler is a special kind of medicine called bronchodilator. This is a fast-acting medicine that:

- Relaxes the airways
- Opens up the airways
- Helps clear mucus
- Prevents wheezing when you exercise



My COPD Action Plan

Every Day	<p>This plan will help me understand my symptoms and to know when to call my doctor.</p> <p>Which COPD zone am I in today? GREEN, YELLOW, or RED?</p>
Green Zone	<p>I am doing well – this zone is my goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am breathing without shortness of breath.• I am sleeping well.• I am able to do normal activities.• I have the usual amount of coughing and mucus.• My appetite is good. <p>I will take my medicine as usual. I will be sure to avoid smoke, fumes, and strong smells.</p>
Yellow Zone	<p>CAUTION – I feel worse. I will call my doctor if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have shortness of breath.• I am tired and unable to do normal daily activities.• I have more mucus; it is thicker with a change of color.• I have a temperature greater than 100.4°F.• I am using my quick-relief inhaler or nebulizer (if you have one) more often and it is not helping.
Red Zone	<p>I feel I am in danger. I will call 911 if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• I have severe shortness of breath, even at rest.• I have chest pain.• I feel confused, agitated or very drowsy.• I am coughing up blood.• I have pale or gray skin/blue lips or fingernails.

