

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Action Care Explained

COPD stands for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. It means the airways in your lungs are blocked (obstructed). This makes it hard to breathe. You may have trouble with daily activities because of shortness of breath. Over time, the shortness of breath often gets worse. This makes it harder to take care of yourself and take part in activities. Chronic bronchitis and emphysema are two common types of COPD.

Causes

- Cigarette smoking – the leading cause of COPD
- Secondhand smoke exposure
- Environmental hazards – air pollution, chemical fumes, and dust
- Indoor air pollution – cooking fumes and poor ventilation
- Childhood respiratory infections
- Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency – a rare inherited condition

Symptoms

- Shortness of breath during usual activities
- Loss of appetite
- Wheezing
- Fatigue or feeling tired easily
- Unable to focus (from low oxygen levels)
- More coughing or mucus than usual
- Weight loss
- Swollen ankles
- Repeated lung infections
- Difficulty sleeping when lying bed with more pillows than usual



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Management

- Take your prescribed medicines as directed
- Quit smoking – it's the most important step you can take
- Get a flu shot every year
- Get a pneumonia shot at least once to help prevent future COPD flare-ups
- Call your healthcare provider within 24 hours of a COPD flare-up (or as soon as you identify one)
- Ask questions about your action plan – contact your healthcare provider anytime
- Call eternalHealth Care Management – we're here to support you

Action Plan

It's important to treat your COPD flare-ups quickly and correctly. This will help you have a better quality of life and slow down the disease. This action plan can help you spot serious symptoms by using green, yellow or red zones.

- **Green zone** – You're taking care of your condition well
- **Yellow zone** – You need to speak with your health care provider (such as a doctor, nurse, physician assistant, etc.) - you may need urgent care
- **Red zone** – Your symptoms are dangerous, and you should immediately seek care

Know Your COPD Management Zone

Green Zone You Feel Well	Yellow Zone You Feel Worse	Red Zone You Feel Much Worse or in Danger
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to breathe without a problem • No change in cough or mucus • No change in energy, ability to think or remember 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More shortness of breath, wheezing or coughing than usual • Mucus is thicker or has turned green or brown • Fever of 100°F or more • Feel forgetful or confused and may have difficulty concentrating or sleeping • Feel more tired and cannot finish usual activities without resting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have trouble breathing • Have trouble coughing up mucus • Blood in mucus • Feel drowsy or have trouble waking up • Not able to do any activities
Action Plan	Action Plan	Action Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue your usual activities • Take your medicine(s) as directed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell family or caregivers when • something is happening • Increase the use of your rescue inhaler or nebulizer (Albuterol or Xopenex®) • Use pursed lip breathing and/or other energy-saving techniques • Take your oral steroids (prednisone) and/or antibiotics your health care provider has prescribed • Call your Health Care Provider or Care Manager • Go to an urgent care or walk-in clinic, as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell family or caregivers when something is happening • Increase the use of your rescue inhaler or nebulizer (Albuterol or Xopenex®) • Use pursed lip breathing and/or other energy-saving techniques • Take your oral steroids (prednisone) and/or antibiotics your Health Care Provider has prescribed • Call your Health Care Provider or Care Manager immediately • Go to the nearest urgent care or walk-in clinic or hospital • Call 911, if necessary

Call Us - We're Here to Help

eternalHealth Care Management
1 (800) 787-5076 (TTY 711)

Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm EST

eternalHealth Urgent Hotline
1 (800) 892-1361 (TTY 711)

24 hours, 7 days a week

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