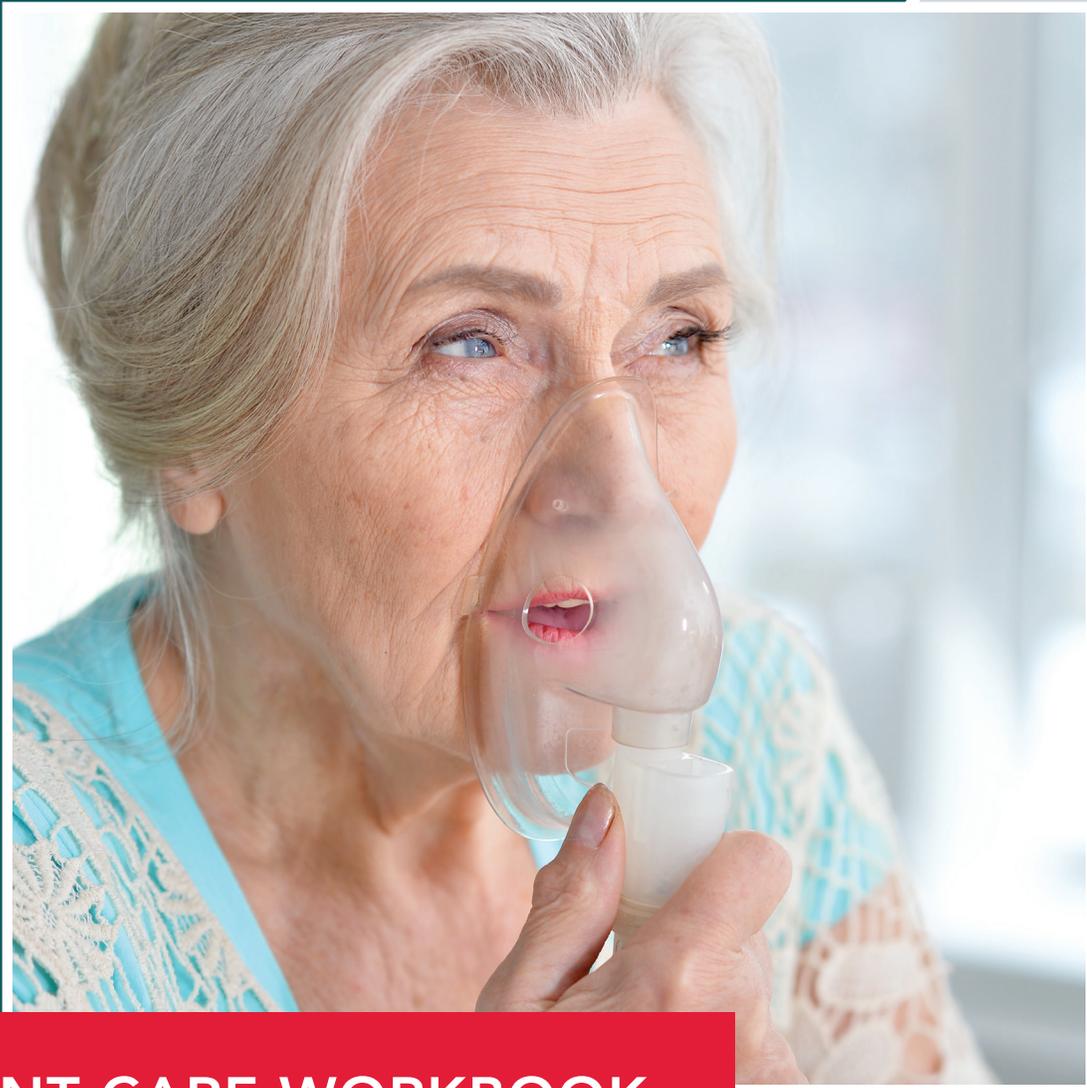


# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)



**PATIENT CARE WORKBOOK**

## What is COPD?

- COPD is a lung disease.
- The airways that carry air to your lungs become narrowed and it becomes harder to breathe.
- There are tiny air sacs where the airways end in your lungs.
- These air sacs don't empty and your lungs feel full when you have COPD.
- Besides feeling short of breath, you may cough more often and cough up mucous.
- Shortness of breath may make daily tasks more difficult and keep you from doing the things you like to do.

I BECOME ___ → WHEN I _____ ↓	A LITTLE SHORT OF BREATH	SOMEWHAT SHORT OF BREATH	VERY SHORT OF BREATH
Get dressed			
Bathe			
Make meals			
Eat			
Do laundry			
Do housework			
Walk around in my house			
Walk around outside			

## COPD is Manageable

This booklet was put together to help you understand your role ("self-care") in keeping your COPD under control.

### Self-Care includes:

- Taking your medicines as ordered by your doctor
- Eating well
- Exercising and staying active
- Using oxygen safely if ordered by your doctor
- Preventing COPD symptoms from worsening
- Monitoring your symptoms and acting right away when they occur
- Seeing your doctor regularly

## COPD Medication

- Several medicines are usually used to manage COPD
- You may be on more medicines than these.
- You doctor, nurse, or pharmacist will give you more specific information about your medicines.
- Always check before taking over-the-counter medicine or herbal supplements. Some medicines can be harmful for patients with COPD.
- Your nurse will help you understand all of your medicines. If you need help, your nurse can give you ideas to help you remember to take your medicines at the right times.
- Many people do not use inhaled medicines correctly. If not used correctly, your symptoms may not be controlled well. Your nurse will watch you use your inhaler and give you tips on using your inhaler better, if you need help.

## Your Medicines

### Inhaled Bronchodilators: Short-Acting

These drugs work by relaxing and opening up your airways. This makes it easier for you to breathe. They are usually taken every 4-6 hours.

I am using: \_\_\_\_\_

### Inhaled Bronchodilators: Long-Acting

These drugs relax and open your airways, making it easier for you to breathe. They take effect more slowly than short acting bronchodilators and work for a longer period of time. They are usually taken every 12 hours.

I am using: \_\_\_\_\_

### Inhaled Corticosteroids

These drugs decrease inflammation and swelling in your airways. They decrease the amount of mucus your airways produce. Rinse your mouth out after you use the inhaled corticosteroids.

I am using: \_\_\_\_\_

### Oral Corticosteroids (Pills)

These drugs decrease inflammation and swelling in your airways. They decrease the amount of mucus your airways produce. Oral corticosteroids are used only for short periods of time when your symptoms have worsened.

I am taking: \_\_\_\_\_

### IV Antibiotics

I am taking: \_\_\_\_\_

### Oral Antibiotics

I am taking: \_\_\_\_\_

### Oxygen

If your blood level is low, your doctor will prescribe oxygen. You may need to use it all of the time, just during certain times of day, or with activities such as sleep or exercise. It is very important that you use your oxygen as your doctor has ordered it – oxygen will help you feel better and be more active. A medical supply company will deliver and teach you about your oxygen. Your home care nurse will also teach you how to manage your oxygen at home and when you got out.

## Diet and Nutrition

- It is important to eat a healthy diet when you have COPD.
- If you are underweight and do not eat enough, you will have less energy.
- If you are overweight, it will be harder to be active and you may have more shortness of breath.
- Your nurse or a dietitian may help you review your own diet, help you read food labels, and give you lists of healthy foods.
- Fruits and vegetables and protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs, and milk are good for you.

There are certain things that make it easier for you to eat when you have COPD.

Check off the things you think you can do:

- Eat a balanced diet with enough calories.
- Ask your doctor or nurse if vitamin supplements would be helpful
- Drink enough fluids – this helps keep your mucus looser
- Eat smaller meals more often
- Decrease the amount of gas forming foods you eat – they make your stomach fuller. This may increase shortness of breath.
- Include fiber in your diet to decrease constipation
- Eat slowly and talk less while you eat
- Sit in a chair that allows for good posture while you eat
- Avoid activity or exercise for an hour after you eat
- Eating a diet lower in carbohydrates may decrease shortness of breath and improve your ability to exercise

## Staying Active and Safe

Exercise is very important when you have COPD. Even if you have severe shortness of breath, you can benefit from an exercise program. Exercises may include chair exercises, walking, or using a stationary bike.

Exercise will:

- Improve your ability to cope with shortness of breath
- Increase your energy and make you feel less tired
- Make you feel better

Before starting an exercise program, your COPD symptoms should be under control. It is important to start slowly when you are not used to exercise. A home physical therapist can help you begin your exercise program.

You will be taught ways to safely exercise such as:

- Using pursed lip breathing to control shortness of breath
- Pacing yourself and stopping to rest when needed
- Using a “pulse ox” monitor to check your oxygen level while you exercise
- Monitoring yourself for fatigue and shortness of breath when you exercise

Your doctor may tell you to use a short-acting bronchodilator before exercise.

## Conserve Your Energy

Learn how to pace your activities or do them in an easier way. You will do more and be less short of breath. A few examples are:

- Walk at a slow and comfortable pace
- Use a bath stool or bench during bathing
- Consider sponge bathing
- Dress seated instead of standing
- Consider use of bedside commode
- Prepare for activities by resting first and using breathing techniques
- Ask for help when you need it

## Controlling Symptoms

The following actions will help keep your COPD under control and help you to stay out of the hospital or emergency room:

- Stop smoking – even when you already have COPD, quitting smoking can help your lungs work better
- Get a flu vaccine every year
- Get a pneumonia vaccine at least once – your doctor may recommend that you have this vaccine every 5 to 10 years
- Decrease your risk of infection by wash your hands often and staying away from persons with colds or flu
- Avoid exposure to things that irritate your lungs, such as extreme weather (very hot or very cold), tobacco smoke, and smog (pay attention to air quality alerts and stay indoors as much as possible during alert times).

## RESOURCES

Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease

[www.goldcopd.org](http://www.goldcopd.org)

American Lung Association

[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org) | 1-800-LUNGUSA

You Can Quit Smoking - Consumer Guide

[www.ahrq.gov/consumer](http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer)

### Local Resources:

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[www.mana.md](http://www.mana.md)