

## COPD Office Visit Checklist

Answer the questions below before your next visit and be sure to talk with your doctor about your answers.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Since your last office visit

1. Has your breathing been worse than usual?  Yes  No
2. Have you coughed more than usual?  Yes  No
3. Have you coughed up more mucus than usual?  Yes  No
4. Has your mucus been thicker than usual?  Yes  No
5. Has your mucus been a different color than usual?  Yes  No
6. Have you been wheezing?  Yes  No
7. Have you been awakened by your breathing?  Yes  No
8. About how many hours have you been sleeping each night? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How would you describe your appetite? Decreased    Normal    Increased
10. Have you lost weight?  Yes  No **If**  Yes, how much? \_\_\_\_\_
11. What activities have you been doing? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Is there any activity that is harder to do because of your breathing?  Yes  No  
\_\_\_\_\_
13. How many times in the past 12 months have you taken an antibiotic or steroid for your breathing? \_\_\_\_\_
14. How often do you use your fast-acting inhaler or nebulizer? \_\_\_\_\_ times in a day.
15. Did you use your long-term controller medicine today?  Yes  No
16. What other medicines do you take for your breathing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Bring all your medicines to your doctor's appointment. Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling and how you can better manage your COPD.

## What Is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a disease of the lungs. It includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis. COPD can make it hard to breathe.

### What causes COPD?

Smoking is the #1 cause of COPD. Some things that increase the risk for COPD are asthma, airway infections early in life, and family health history.

### What are the symptoms?

COPD develops slowly. It may be many years before you notice symptoms. Most of the time, COPD is diagnosed in middle-aged or older people.

Common symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath when exercising
- Shortness of breath when resting
- Coughing up mucus in the morning
- Coughing every day
- A chest infection that lasts more than 2 weeks
- Wheezing



### How do you manage COPD?

- **If** you smoke, quit.
- Stay away from smoke, dust, pollutants, strong odors, and chemicals.
- Seek treatment right away for coughing, wheezing, and airway infections.
- Take your medicines as your doctor tells you.

Can COPD be cured?        No. There is no cure for COPD.

The good news is that COPD can be managed. Talk to your doctor about treatments that can make you breathe better and prevent flare-ups.

## Preventing COPD Flare-ups

A flare-up is when your symptoms get worse. Your doctor may use the term "exacerbation" to describe a flare-up.

Flare-ups may be caused by:

- Smoking or exposure to smoke from other smokers
- Airway infections
- Pollutants (like dust or chemicals)



Prevent flare-ups as they may lead to loss of lung function.

- Get treatment right away **if** you have a flare-up

### Protect yourself from airway infections

- Ask your doctor **if** you need vaccines (shots) to help prevent flu or pneumonia
- Stay away from friends or coworkers who have colds or the flu

### Education can help prevent flare-ups

The goal is to help you better manage your COPD. This is done by:

- Learning about your disease
- Learning how to breathe properly
- Taking medicines as directed
- Using equipment correctly (if you use any equipment to help **with** your breathing)
- Learning which exercises **will** help you feel better

### Be aware of your breathing

- Watch for symptoms like more shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing than usual. Look for a change **in** the color of your mucus
- Tell your doctor **if** new symptoms appear
- Ask your doctor how you can prevent a flare-up
- Ask your doctor what to do **if** you have a flare-up
- *H* your symptoms change, seek treatment quickly

Taking care of yourself can help prevent COPD flare-ups.

## Living With COPD

COPD can affect every part of your life, but there are ways to help your breathing. Take an active role in your treatment, and talk to your doctor about COPD.

### Quit smoking

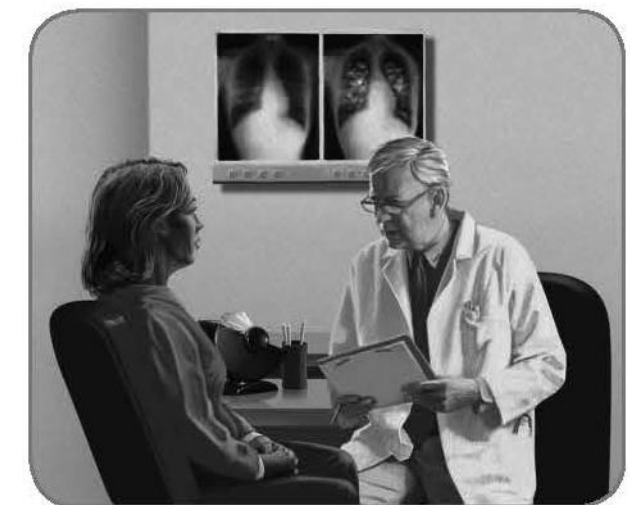
- *H* you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do.
- Ask your doctor for ways to help you quit smoking.

### Talk with your doctor

- Tell your doctor about your symptoms or any flareups at every visit.
- Report any changes in your activity level.
- Bring your medicines to every doctor visit.
- Tell your doctor **if** you are feeling sad or anxious about your COPD.
- Work **with** your doctor to create goals of care.

### Do your part

- Learn about COPD.
- Learn about your medicines.
- Take your medicines as directed.
- Keep doctor appointments.
- Ask for support from your family and friends.
- Follow an exercise program as recommended by your doctor.
- Eat the right foods as directed.
- Pace yourself as you walk.
- Break up large tasks into small pieces.
- Ask about support groups.



Take an active role in managing your COPD to help you feel better.