

Living With COPD: Tips for Patients and Caregivers

If you have COPD, you know it can affect every part of your life. COPD can also affect family, caregivers, and friends. Here are tips to help make life easier.

Tips for patients with COPD Manage your COPD

- If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do! If you have already quit, congratulations! If you need help with quitting tobacco, ask your doctor for help. –You might want to consider using nicotine replacement.
- Remember to take your medicines as your doctor tells you.
- Keep your doctor visits.
- Stay away from smoke and pollutants (like dust or chemicals).
- Seek treatment for coughing, wheezing, and airway infections right away.

Talk with your doctor

- Tell your doctor about your symptoms at every visit.
- Report any changes in your level of daily activity. • Talk about your medicines, and bring them with you to every visit.
- Tell your doctor if you are feeling sad or anxious about your breathing.

Ask questions

- Learn as much as you can about COPD, your medicines, and other ways to help you breathe better.
- Ask about support groups. Talking with others who are living with COPD may help.

Tips for friends, family, and caregivers

Friends and family members can't always understand what it's like when shortness of breath makes even everyday tasks difficult. Here's how you can help your loved one with COPD.

Keep your home smoke-free

- If you live with the person with COPD and smoke, quit.
- Keep cigarette smoke, fireplace smoke, and things like fumes from household cleaners, perfumes, and air fresheners out of your home or car.



Learn about COPD

- Talk with the doctor about how you can help your loved one with COPD.
- Read books or Internet Web sites for more information.
- Call the American Lung Association at 1-800-LUNG-USA for more information.

Support open communication

- Suggest the person be open about how he or she feels.
- If your loved one seems sad or anxious, suggest that he or she talk with the doctor.

Help the person with COPD follow doctor's orders

- Help the person remember to take medicines and keep doctor visits.
- Give gentle reminders to follow the treatment plan given by the doctor. This includes medicines, exercise, and eating the right foods.
- If the person with COPD uses oxygen, learn about oxygen equipment and how to use it properly.

Take time for yourself

- Ask other members of the family or friends to give you a break if you need it.
- Join a support group. Talking with others who care for someone with COPD may help. Your doctor or the American Lung Association can help you find a group near you.

Whether you have COPD, or take care of someone with COPD, remember that you don't have to "go it alone." Working together with the doctor will help both patients and caregivers better manage COPD.



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