

A self-management plan for patients with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

This is your personal self-management plan. Bring it with you every time you see a healthcare professional about your COPD.

The aim of this plan is to help you have better control of your COPD. It will enable you to monitor your symptoms and to know what to do if you have an exacerbation. An exacerbation is a rapid and sustained worsening of your symptoms that may warrant a change to your regular treatment.

This plan includes sections for recording medication, monitoring symptoms and treating exacerbations.

Name:

Date of birth:

NHS number:

GP practice:

Diagnosis:

Outside normal GP practice hours, please call NHS 111 or 999 for emergencies and urgent care.

Usual COPD symptoms when well

Breathlessness score

Please record the MRC breathlessness score (see below) that describes your symptoms when you are well.

Date:

Score:

The MRC breathlessness scale

Grade	Degree of breathlessness related to activities
1	Not troubled by breathlessness except on strenuous exercise.
2	Short of breath when hurrying on the level or walking up a slight hill.
3	Walks slower than most people on the level, stops after a mile or so or stops after 15 minutes walking at own pace.
4	Stops for breath after walking about 100 yards or after a few minutes on level ground.
5	Too breathless to leave the house, or breathless when undressing.

Sputum production

The normal colour of your sputum is:

How much sputum do you produce each day?

Cough

Do you normally have a cough?

Swollen ankles

Do you normally have ankle swelling?

Usual respiratory medications

Inhaler or tablet name	Preparation	Dose and frequency

Oxygen saturation level

Normal oxygen saturation is 92 per cent or above.

Your usual level is %

How do I keep well?

- Daily exercise.
- Eat a good balanced diet.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Do not smoke, and avoid smoky environments.
- Plan ahead and have things to look forward to.
- Always have enough medications - never run out.
- Take all medication regularly as prescribed whether you think they help you at the time or not.
- Make sure you have your annual flu vaccination.

Your COPD may be getting worse if you:

- are more breathless than usual
- have an increase in the amount or change in the colour of your sputum
- have a new or increased cough
- have new or increased ankle swelling
- are more frequently using reliever medication
- are less able to do your normal activities or they are taking longer because of shortness of breath.

Action to take if your COPD symptoms are getting worse:

- Increase reliever medication.
- Balance activity with plenty of rest.
- Eat little and often.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Continue to monitor your symptoms closely.

- If your symptoms improve within two days, continue your usual medication.
- If they are no better or are getting worse, continue with the increased dose or reliever medication and see the ***What to do if you have an exacerbation*** section on the next page.

What to do if you have an exacerbation?

You are having an exacerbation if you have **two** of the following three signs:

- 1) You are much more breathless than usual.
- 2) You have an increase in the amount of sputum.
- 3) You have a change in colour of sputum.

☐ What to do if you have an exacerbation of your COPD:

- ☐ contact your GP or your practice nurse
- ☐ contact the community nurse and/or respiratory nurse
- ☐ start taking your standby supply of steroids and/or antibiotics
- ☐ other _____.

Standby exacerbation medication

Steroids (prednisolone)

If you are much more breathless than normal, and your daily living activities are affected, continue with increased reliever medication and start taking prednisolone.

Dose of prednisolone: 30mg, once a day for 7 to 10 days.

Antibiotics

If the colour of your sputum changes from your normal colour, start your antibiotics.

Preparation:

Dose:

If you experience an exacerbation of your COPD, and start prednisolone and/or antibiotics, always Let your GP or practice nurse know as soon as possible.

Emergency symptoms of COPD

- Extremely short of breath with no relief from inhalers.
- Chest pain.
- High fever.
- Feeling of agitation, drowsiness, panic or confusion.

Contact your GP surgery immediately. Outside normal GP practice hours, please call NHS 111 or 999 for emergencies and urgent care.

Have you used your standby exacerbation medication?

Remember to:

- contact your GP or community nurse (delete as appropriate) if you do not start to feel better after **three days** of treatment
- contact your GP or community nurse (delete as appropriate) if you take **more than one** course of *standby* steroids and antibiotics **in one month**.

Exacerbation diary

Date	Treatment used	Hospital admission

My hospital consultant is:

Any other relevant information or advice: