







## Emergency symptoms of COPD

### Severe symptoms - what you and your carer should look out for.

- You are severely breathless or have difficulty breathing
- You are not beginning to feel better after one or two days of taking your rescue medication at home
- You feel drowsy
- You are agitated or confused
- You have chest pain
- You have a high fever
- You have worsening ankle/leg swelling
- You can't cope at home

If this is you, call and ask for an urgent consultation. If you are unable to do so, dial 999 for an Ambulance.

If you do go to Hospital by ambulance, take this booklet with you and tell the paramedic you have COPD. The information on the back of this booklet will help them and the hospital staff know what treatment to give.

### **OXYGEN ALERT CARD**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I am at risk of type I respiratory failure with a raised CO<sub>2</sub> level.  
Please use my % Venturi mask to achieve an oxygen saturation of \_\_\_\_\_ % to \_\_\_\_\_ % during exacerbations.

Use compressed air to drive nebulisers (with nasal oxygen at 2 litres per minute). If compressed air not available, limit oxygen driven nebulisers to 6 minutes.

### How do I keep well?

**DON'T SMOKE.** If you are still smoking please ask for help, it's never too late to stop.

- Take daily exercise
- Eat a good balanced diet
- Drink plenty of liquids
- Plan ahead and have things to look forwards to
- Always have enough medications - never run out
- Take all medication regularly as prescribed, whether you think they help at the time or not
- Make sure you get your annual flu vaccination

### When you are well and stable

When you are well and your condition is stable, the following action will help you to stay healthy and reduce the risk of developing a flare up:

### Practice breathing control daily

Practicing your breathing control daily will help you when you are active and getting breathless, and will help you manage a sudden onset of breathlessness:

1. Relax your upper chest and shoulders
2. Breathe in through your nose and you should feel your stomach move out.
3. Breathe out through your mouth and you should feel your stomach move in

Practice breathing control for \_\_\_\_\_ minutes \_\_\_\_\_ times a day.



## Your COPD may be GETTING WORSE...

### ...If you have any of the following symptoms:

- You are more breathless than usual
- Your chest is tighter than usual
- A new or worsening wheeze
- An increase in the amount, or change in colour, of your sputum
- A new or worsening cough
- New or worsening ankle swelling
- Feeling like you need to use more of your reliever medication
- You are less able to do your normal activities or they are taking longer because of shortness of breath.

### What action to take if your COPD symptoms are getting worse:

Increase reliever medication to the following :

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- Balance activity with plenty of rest
- Eat little and often
- Drink plenty of fluids
- If you are producing more phlegm remember to do your chest clearance exercises.

### Continue to monitor your symptoms closely.

If your symptoms improve within two days, continue your usual medication. If they are no better after two days then move to the Amber Zone.

## What to do if you have a flare up

If you are no better or are getting worse after two days, then start your rescue medication.

### Standby rescue medication

- **Steroid (Prednisolone).** If you are much more breathless than normal, and your daily living activities are affected, continue with increased delivery medication and start taking prednisolone.

**Dose of Prednisolone 5mg: Take \_\_\_\_\_ once a day for \_\_\_\_\_ days**

Take the Prednisolone tablets together in the morning with food.

- **Antibiotics**

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

**Antibiotic:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dose:** \_\_\_\_\_

If you experience a flare up of COPD and start Prednisolone, and/or antibiotics, ALWAYS advise your \_\_\_\_\_ as soon as possible and make an appointment in 2 weeks.

Remember to get your rescue medication renewed.

**If you need help out of hours please call 111.**