



## Flu



Flu season is here. Are you prepared? There are simple steps that you can take to help prevent the flu. Follow these simple tips to reduce your risk for getting the flu:

- **Get the flu shot** every year.
- **Don't touch your face.** If you touch a germ then touch your face, you can catch the flu.
- **Keep it covered.** Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or use a tissue.
- **Wash your hands often.**
- **Avoid people that are sick.**

Even with the flu shot, you may still get the flu, but your symptoms won't be as bad. Remember, the flu is a virus. That means antibiotics won't cure it. Antibiotics fight illness caused by bacteria. They don't work against things usually caused by viruses like colds, the flu, or most coughs and sore throats.

People with a chronic condition are at higher risk for flu complications. Be prepared this flu season. Talk to your provider today to see if the flu shot is right for you.

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## Need Help Quitting Smoking?

If you need help quitting, call the "I Can Quit" program at 1-800-480-7848 for one-on-one help.

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*You are receiving this newsletter as part of a Disease Management Program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in any Disease Management Program please let us know. Please call us at 1-866-449-6828, ext. 155355.*

*All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your provider's advice.*

## Asthma: Timing Your Medication

Good asthma control means taking your medication correctly. There are two main types of asthma medication. Quick-relief medicine is one type. It acts fast to open up your airways. You should take your quick-relief medicine when you first begin to feel symptoms. Your provider may want you to take this medicine 15 minutes before exercise. You should carry your quick-relief inhaler with you all the time.

Long-term medicine is the second type. It is used to prevent asthma symptoms. These drugs ease swelling on the inside of your airways. One kind is an inhaled steroid. It is important to take this medicine even if you feel well. It works best when taken on a regular basis. You should rinse, gargle and spit with water after each dose of inhaled steroids.

Consistent use of medications is essential to symptom prevention. Take your preventive medicine every day. Try taking your medicine along with something you always do. This will help you to remember to take it.

Here is a list of ideas from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute:

- Keep your medicine on the nightstand next to the bed
- Take your medicine right after you brush your teeth
- Put reminder notes in visible places like the bathroom mirror or front door
- Place your medicine in a weekly pillbox
- Set a watch alarm to beep and remind you to take your medicine
- Remember to refill your prescription. Order and pick up the next refill one week before the medicine is due to run out

Knowing when and how to take your medication is important. It can make a difference in asthma control. Be sure to ask your provider or nurse if you have questions.

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## Asthma Triggers: Secondhand Smoke

### **What Is Secondhand Smoke?**

Secondhand smoke is the exhaled smoke from a smoker's nose or mouth. It is also the smoke that comes from the end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe.

### **How Can Secondhand Smoke Trigger Asthma Attacks?**

Secondhand smoke bothers the inflamed airways of a person with asthma. This can cause an asthma attack. This happens more often in children because their airways are still growing. Children get high doses of secondhand smoke from family members who smoke.

### **How Can You Protect Yourself or Others From Secondhand Smoke?**

- Do not smoke or let others smoke in your house or car
- Do not let others smoke near your children

Molina Healthcare has a stop smoking program. Call (800) 784-8669 for more information.

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

## Staying on a Schedule with Your Medication

One great way to manage your Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is to know what medicines you are taking and how they work. Staying on a schedule with your medication is important. There are many different types of COPD medication. They come in the form of pills, vapors, powders, and liquids. What you are taking depends on your condition. Not everyone with COPD takes the same medication.

One type of COPD medicine is a bronchodilator. It reduces shortness of breath by relaxing your airways. These are often taken by inhaler. They may be:

- short-acting - used to treat symptoms that come and go.
- long-acting - used to prevent breathing problems before they start and keep symptoms under control.

Corticosteroids can also be used to treat COPD. They reduce swelling and also may be used if you have asthma.

COPD medicines often come in the form of an inhaler or nebulizer. They must be used correctly to get the right dose of medicine. So be sure to ask your provider to show you how to use your medication appropriately.

It is very important for you to take your medicine regularly. Try to take it at the same time every day. Always take your medicine, even if you feel good. Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your provider first. Here are some tips to help you remember to take your medicine:

- Take your medicine with other daily habits, like when you brush your teeth.
- Set your watch alarm to remind you to take your medicine.
- Leave yourself a note on the bathroom mirror.
- Keep your medicine in a place where you will see it.
- Mark a calendar with a refill date.

Taking your medicine regularly can help you feel better. If you have questions, call your provider!





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## Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call

TTY/1-866-735-2929 English

TTY/1-866-833-4703 Spanish