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Part# 1345Rev0508



Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 English

1-866-648-3537 Spanish

OPEN 24 HOURS!

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call

TTY/866-735-2929 English

TTY/866-833-4703 Spanish

When you travel
away from your
hometown,
Molina Healthcare
pays for emergency
care for you.

You may go to a local emergency room (ER) or an urgent care clinic. Tell them you are a Molina Healthcare member. Show them your Molina Healthcare ID card. But don't forget, routine care is not covered when you travel away from home.



Dealing with COPD and Asthma

What can you do to handle Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) better?

- You could change any behavior that can make it worse.
- Most important thing you can do for is to stop smoking.
- Continuing to smoke in most cases will only worsen your fight with COPD.

AS A COPD PATIENT:

- **You need clean air.** You should also avoid being around smokers and fume-laden air. During fog or smog, try to stay indoors with the windows closed. If possible, use fumeless appliances for heating.
- **Polluted air** also can irritate your lungs. Try not to go out when the air quality is rated poor. But if you cannot avoid excessive air pollution, protect your mouth and nose with a mask.
- You **should see your doctor on a regular basis** - especially if you have a chest cold or any time you cough up mucus.
- It is also important to guard against catching the flu by getting an **influenza vaccine** each fall, well before winter starts. A **pneumonia vaccine** should also be given to anyone over age 60, and all persons with COPD.

There are many different types of treatments that can help you cope with COPD and live your life to the fullest. Keep reading to find out more about COPD treatment – but remember that your doctor is the best person to direct your care and should be the one to select the treatment that will be most helpful to you.

CLEARING YOUR LUNGS:

Coughing has an important “cleaning action” and is something you should practice every day – especially in the morning, when mucus may have settled in your lungs as you slept. You must learn to cough in such a way that you can clear your lungs of mucus with two or three coughs. Your doctor or the respiratory therapist will teach you the way that is best for your particular problem.

As an aid to this cleaning, your doctor may recommend breathing moist or

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Smoking and COPD Do Not Mix

Would you like help to stop smoking? Call Molina Healthcare of Texas Health Education at 210-366-6500 x 203015.

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Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at www.molinahealthcare.com. You can use the Internet for free at most public libraries. “Click” on the member button and drag your mouse down to your state. You can get information on our website about:

- Molina Healthcare’s contracted doctors and hospitals
- Your benefits, including copayments and other charges (if they apply)
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Drug formulary (approved drugs that doctors can prescribe)
- How to contact a Nurse to help you with your health care
- How to get primary care, hospital, specialty, and emergency services
- How to get care after normal office hours
- Preventive health guidelines and immunization schedule
- Your rights and responsibilities and the privacy of your information
- Restrictions on benefits or how to obtain care outside the Molina Healthcare service area
- Quality Improvement, Health Education, and Disease Management programs
- How to voice a complaint or appeal a medical decision
- How we decide about using new technology

You can ask for printed copies of anything posted on the website by calling 1-866-449-6849. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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Dealing with COPD and Asthma *(Continued)*

humid air, and drinking plenty of fluids every day. Doing this may help thin out the mucus so that you can cough it up more easily.

Your doctor may also recommend that you use inhaled bronchodilating drugs or anti-inflammatory drugs to open your airways and help increase the normal flow of mucus out of your lungs (Keep reading to find out more about these drugs.)

BREATHING TECHNIQUES:

Learning to breathe properly is another very important lesson for people with COPD. If you have COPD, you usually work very hard to breathe. However, because you are not breathing properly, your hard work does not make you feel better and you become tired easily.

There are several things you can do to improve your breathing:

- **Relax.** Being tense makes it harder to breathe.
- **Breathe out through pursed lips,** like when whistling. This slows down your breathing and makes each breath do more good for you.
- **Lean forward while exercising.** This also helps control shortness of breath.
- **“Belly breathing”** may also help shortness of breath. This is done by allowing your belly to stick out while breathing in and then pulling your belly in while breathing out. Remember to purse your lips when breathing out!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY:

Often people make the mistake of believing that if they try to avoid becoming short of breath, they will protect their lungs and heart. **THIS IS NOT TRUE!** Remaining physically active will improve your breathing ability and help you feel better and enjoy life more.

You can exercise even if you have COPD. As we all know, muscles will become weak if we don't use them. This is

true for the muscles of your chest, which are important in breathing, as well. Strengthening these muscles will help decrease shortness of breath.

Don't let COPD change your normal attitudes about exercise. You should walk every day, trying to do a little more than you did the day before. Start by walking in your house, then try walking out of doors (but not when there is poor air quality) – walking longer distances each time.

Your doctor will help you find the exercises that are best for you. Ask if there is a local pulmonary rehabilitation program, where you can learn more about your COPD and get advice and support to learn the best ways to exercise and control your COPD symptoms.

OXYGEN:

Supplemental oxygen is a very helpful treatment that enables many patients with severe COPD lead a more normal and productive life.

Your doctor may order an oxygen test (by taking blood from an artery or by using an oximeter) – and if your oxygen level is low, the doctor will prescribe it for you. Portable devices will allow you to carry oxygen with you, or your doctor might tell you to use oxygen only at night during sleep when your oxygen level may drop because of shallow breathing. Liquid portable oxygen now comes in a very light device, making it the most practical ambulatory system. Your doctor will order the proper oxygen system which can benefit you the most. The device supplier (often called a durable medical equipment company or DME) must follow your doctor's prescription exactly as it is written. The DME will also instruct you in how to use your oxygen equipment safely. A respiratory therapist may also be called in to help you learn more about using supplemental oxygen. Follow the directions you are given carefully, as you would for any medication that is prescribed, and be sure to ask questions if you do not fully understand how to use your equipment!

Getting the Help You Need

Know when to call the doctor. It is time to call the doctor when you have any of the following symptoms:

- More shortness of breath or wheezing that is quickly getting worse.
- Are coughing more deeply or more often.
- More mucus (sputum) or a change in the color of the mucus you cough up.
- Coughing up blood.
- More swelling in your legs or stomach.
- Signs of an infection (such as high fever or feeling poorly)
- Develop flu-like symptoms.
- Notice that your medicine is not working as well as usual.

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOUR SYMPTOMS GET WORSE. CALL YOUR DOCTOR RIGHT AWAY FOR HELP.

Spirometry Testing

COPD means you have chronic bronchitis or emphysema, or a little bit of both. People with COPD have trouble breathing. A spirometry test measures breathing. It can often be done at the doctor's office. It tells the doctor how your lungs are working. It helps your doctor decide how to best help you.

A spirometry test is very short. It shows two important graphs. One shows the amount of air you can breathe in or out. The second shows the total amount of air you can breathe in and out.

This is what happens during a test. You will take a very deep breath and then breathe out as hard as you can, for as long as you can. Your doctor may give you a soft nose clip so you breathe only from your mouth. You might take a quick breath in again. This is to see if there is anything blocking your breathing. You repeat the test three times to make sure it is right.

Spirometry is also used to check people with asthma. It measures how well your lungs work after exercise, or breathing cold or dry air.

Your doctor can do this test to see how well a medicine



is working. You do the test before taking your medicine. After taking the medicine, you do the test again. Then the doctor can see how well it worked.

Not all spirometers look the same. Not all are exactly alike. But they measure the same things and they will all help your doctor make the best treatment decisions.

COPD and Nutrition

For people with a lung disease, such as emphysema and COPD, diet and nutrition are very important. A healthy diet can help you fight infections and prevent illness.

People who suffer from lung disease use a lot of energy to breathe. Some may use up to ten times the calories of a healthy person just trying to breathe. Proper nutrition helps to maintain the functions of the respiratory system and help with breathing.

DIET TIPS:

- Drink plenty of fluids. If you have a heart problem, check with your doctor.
- Limit your salt intake. Salt may keep fluids in your body, causing swelling and breathing harder.
- Limit your intake of drinks with caffeine. Caffeine

can interfere with some medicine and make you feel nervous.

- Avoid foods which may cause gas and bloating. These foods may include: apples, dried beans, broccoli, and cabbage.
- Eat 4 to 5 small healthy meals a day. Large meals can make you feel full. This may make it hard to breathe.
- Eat your main meal early in the day. You may have more energy during the day.
- Choose foods that are easy to fix. Make extra food and freeze it.
- If you use oxygen, use it during meals. Your body needs energy to eat and digest foods.

Eating a healthy diet can help you breathe better and feel better. Talk to your doctor about special diet needs.

You are receiving this newsletter as part of the COPD program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in the COPD program, please call the Molina Health Education Line at 1-888-562-5442, ext. 203015.