



## Take Special Care During Flu Season



People with COPD are more likely to get respiratory infections. To help keep you well, get a flu shot *every year*, in the fall before flu season starts. You cannot get the flu from a flu shot.

### Tips to avoid getting the flu:

- Avoid people who are sick, which may mean staying out of crowded places when you can.
- Wash your hands often and very well for at least 20 seconds with soap and warm water, and dry your hands with a clean towel.
- Don't touch your face and don't share things that can spread flu germs like cups, utensils and phones. Germs can be anywhere. If you touch a germ and then touch your face it can enter your body through your nose or mouth.
- Watch for signs of a cold or the flu. Call your health care provider right away if you:
  - Get a fever
  - Have a hard time breathing
  - Get a stuffy nose
  - Have more coughing
  - Have yellow or green mucus
  - Are more tired than usual

If you do get the flu, stay home and get plenty of rest. Water, popsicles and soup are good sources of important fluids. Antibiotics won't help cure the flu because they only act against bacteria. Colds and flu are caused by viruses.

It is also important to get the pneumonia shot. You do not need a pneumonia shot every year. Ask your health care provider how many years it will last.

AGAIN, remember that it is important to call your health care provider if you think you have the flu. **You also may call Molina's Nurse Advice Line at:**

**English: 1-888-275-8750**  
**Spanish: 1-866-648-3537**  
**TTY: 1-866-735-2929**

Nurses are available to answer your questions or give you more information any time 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The phone number is also on the back of your Member ID card.

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### Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at [www.MolinaHealthcare.com](http://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 providers and hospitals
- Your benefits
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Drug formulary (approved drugs that providers 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 **1-800-642-4168**. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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## Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 (English)  
1-866-648-3537 (Español/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

## Living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Shortness of breath is one of the main signs of COPD. Working with your provider to control COPD may slow down the damage to your lungs. Here are some things you can do to manage COPD:

- If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do to help your lungs. It is never too late to quit smoking. Quitting can help slow down the disease from getting worse. It can help improve your quality of life.
- Try to keep the air in your home clean. Here are some things that may help you:
  - Keep smoke, fumes and strong smells out of your home
  - Stay away from your home if there is fresh paint.
  - Cook near an open door or window
  - Keep your windows closed and stay at home when there is a lot of pollution or dust outside
- Take your medicine as ordered by your provider. Make sure you refill them before you run out. If you do not take your medicine this can make your symptoms worse. This can lead to a medical crisis.
- Visit your provider at least two times a year, even if you are feeling fine. Always bring a list of all your medicines when you visit your provider.
- Eat healthy foods. Eat lots of fruits and vegetables. Drink plenty of fluids. It is important to eat healthy food because food will give you the energy you need for your daily activities.
- Try to stay active.
- Talk to your provider about getting a flu shot and pneumonia vaccination.
- Have your action plan handy and ready to use for days when symptoms are worse.

Managing your COPD may help you reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life.

## Smoking Cessation

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, or COPD, is a disease in which the airways in your lungs are blocked. COPD includes emphysema and chronic bronchitis.

If you have COPD and you are a smoker, it is important for you to quit. Most COPD deaths are caused by smoking. Smoking causes cells in the lungs to make more mucus. Extra mucus clogs the airways. Smoking also causes the airways to become irritated and inflamed. Tiny air sacs in your lungs are destroyed when you smoke, so your body gets less oxygen.

The American Lung Association offers these tips for smokers who decide to quit:

- Don't try to quit when you are under a lot of stress or around a holiday.
- Be sure to get some exercise every day.
- Get plenty of sleep, eat a balanced diet and drink lots of water.
- Ask family and friends to help. Having someone to take a walk with or just listen can give a needed boost.

There is no cure for COPD, but there are things you can do to slow the damage. Quitting smoking can be hard, but it is one of the best things that you can do for your health.



## Mental Health - Taking Care of Yourself

Living with COPD might cause you or your loved ones to feel angry, depressed, worried or overwhelmed. These feelings are normal. But for good control of your disease, you must take charge of it. Good self-care can help you feel better physically and mentally.

**The Cleveland Clinic Health System offers these tips to deal with emotional blues:**

- Get dressed every day.
- Go out and walk whenever possible.
- Keep up with activities or hobbies you enjoy.
- Stay involved with others. Try not to withdraw yourself from your friends and family.
- Share your feelings with your spouse, friend, or clergy.
- Get a good night's sleep.
- Follow your treatment plan.
- Set and follow a realistic daily schedule.
- Join a support group for people with COPD.

It's okay to ask your friends and family for support. They can provide emotional support and encourage you to follow your treatment plan. They can go to provider appointments with you and learn about COPD. They can also help with chores around the house or run errands.

Keeping your stress level low is important. You might not be able to avoid stress, but you can do things to manage it. Daily exercise can reduce stress. It can also help you build endurance and strength. Relaxation exercises are a great way to reduce stress and anxiety. You can try diaphragmatic breathing, pursed lip breathing, imagery, or repetitive phrases.



- For diaphragmatic breathing, take a deep breath in through your nose. Your stomach should push out. Breathe out slowly through your mouth.
- Pursed lip breathing is the same. When you breathe out, purse your lips like you are going to whistle.
- Imagery means that you sit quietly and imagine yourself in a relaxing place.
- Repetitive phrases means repeating a phrase such as "relax and let go."

Make your life as easy as possible to avoid getting frustrated or overwhelmed. The National Heart Lung and Blood Institute offers the following tips:

- Do things slowly.
- Do things sitting down.
- Put things you need in one place that is easy to reach.
- Find simple ways to cook, clean and do other chores. Use a pole or tongs with long handles to help you reach things.
- Wear clothes and shoes that are easy to put on and take off.

Staying upbeat can help you manage COPD. However, if you feel depressed or have signs of depression it is important to talk to your health care provider right away.

You are receiving this as part of the COPD program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in the COPD program, please call Molina Health Education at 1-800-357-0146 ext. 214390.