



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

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Staying on a Schedule with Your Medication

One great way to manage your 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.

Take your medicine as prescribed. Try your best to take it at the same time every day. Never stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor first. Always take your medicine, even if you feel good. The medicine is what is helping.

Get your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy. Pick them up a week before your medicine runs out. Talk to your doctor if you have trouble getting to the pharmacy or have financial concerns about your medicine. Do not take a smaller dose to save money. You must take a full dose in order for the medicine to work.

Here are some tips to remember to take your medicine:

- Take your medicine with other daily habits. For example, take them before you brush your teeth.
- Mark a calendar with a refill date.
- 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.

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

Smoking and COPD Do Not Mix

Would you like help to stop smoking? Call Molina Healthcare of Utah's **Smoke Free** Program toll-free at 1-888-483-0760 ext. 170458. Molina members can join the **Smoke Free** Smoking Cessation Program at no cost.

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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 UM staff about a UM issue or question
- 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 1-888-483-0760. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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What is Dyspnea?

If you have COPD you may have heard of the word “dyspnea.” Dyspnea (disp-nee-uh) means difficult, painful breathing, or a feeling of shortness of breath.

People with COPD feel this way because air gets trapped in their lungs. COPD is a word used to describe a group of respiratory diseases. Usually, people with COPD have both emphysema and chronic bronchitis. With emphysema, the tiny air sacs in the lungs are damaged. They cannot recoil to release carbon dioxide. That means not enough carbon dioxide leaves the lungs. With chronic bronchitis, mucus blocks the airways. This makes it hard for air to get in and out. In short, less oxygen enters the lungs and not all of the carbon dioxide gets out. Strong emotions like stress and anxiety can make the feeling of dyspnea worse.

Questions to Ask Your MD

We’ve all been there. You see your healthcare provider, have your questions answered, but by the time you get home you can’t quite remember what he or she said. On top of that, you forgot to ask an important question.

Next time you can be more prepared by writing down your questions ahead of time. Here are some questions you may want to ask your doctor:

Questions about symptoms

- What should I do if my symptoms get worse?
- Can we create an “Action Plan” for my COPD?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent or lessen my symptoms?

Questions about your medication

- How long will it take for my medicine to work?
- How long will I have to take my medicine?
- What are the side effects of these medicines?
- Are there any drug interactions or over the counter medicines I should worry about?

Questions about prevention

- What types of things can I do to help myself?
- I’ve smoked for years. Will quitting now help?
- How can I become more active?
- Are there dietary changes I should make?

What can you do about dyspnea? One thing to do is pursed-lip breathing. That means before you exhale you purse your lips like you are going to whistle. Then you let the air out slowly. This prevents air trapping. Exercise also helps. It keeps the muscles you use for breathing strong. Also, diet can make a difference. For some people, eating a diet with less carbohydrates and more fat helps them breathe better. This is because carbs create more carbon dioxide than fats.

Lastly, make sure to follow your treatment plan and take your medication. If you have any questions about dyspnea, talk to your health care provider.

Questions about the future

- When should I come back next?
- When should I be worried if I don’t start improving?

Questions about resources

- What resources are available to me?
- Where can I learn more about my condition?

These questions are just a start. If you think of something else to ask, write it down and leave some space to write down the answer. The more you know about COPD, the better you can manage it.



Eating Right

Did you know that what you eat affects how you breathe? If you have COPD, you need extra energy just to breathe. You can burn 10 times as many calories breathing than someone without COPD. For this reason, it is important to get good nutrition.

The food we eat is made up of three kinds of energy. These are carbohydrates, protein, and fat. Our body needs oxygen to break down each of these. As a result, we get fuel for our body and carbon dioxide. Each energy source needs a different amount of oxygen to be broken down and makes a different amount of carbon dioxide. Carbohydrates produce the most carbon dioxide. Fat makes the least.

Why does all of this matter? When someone with COPD breathes in, their lungs don’t fill with as much oxygen as healthy lungs do. And when they exhale, they cannot get rid of as much carbon dioxide as healthy lungs can. Remember that carbohydrates make the most carbon dioxide. Some people with COPD find that eating a diet low in carbohydrates helps them breathe better.

Eating carbohydrates is still important, but try to get them from whole grain bread and pasta and fruit and vegetables. Protein is important too. Our muscles and other body tissues are made of protein. Your diaphragm is a muscle that helps you breathe. In fact, it is the largest muscle in your body. Fats make the least carbon dioxide when broken down. However, it is better to get your fat from a plant

source. These fats are usually liquid at room temperature. Canola, safflower, and corn oils are examples.

Here are some tips from the American Association for Respiratory Care:

- Limit your salt intake. Too much sodium can make you retain fluid and make it harder for you to breathe.
- Avoid foods that produce gas or make you feel bloated.
- Try to eat your main meal early. This way, you will have energy to carry you through the day.
- Choose foods that are easy to make. You don’t want to waste all of your energy making a meal.
- Try eating six small meals a day instead of three big ones. This will keep your stomach from overfilling and causing shortness of breath.
- If you use oxygen, make sure to wear your cannula while eating. Eating and digestion use energy, which requires oxygen.
- Don’t rush through your meal. Eat slowly and in a relaxed way.

Eating right will help you breathe better and give you more energy so that you can lead an active life. In addition, your body will be able to fight infections better. That means you can spend more time enjoying the things you like to do!

Cardio You Can Do

Regular exercise is important for everyone, even if you have COPD. Exercise can help your body use oxygen better and can improve your COPD symptoms. It can build energy levels so that you can spend more time doing things you enjoy. Exercise is good for the mind too. It can reduce stress and anxiety.

Before you start an exercise program ask your doctor:

- How much and how often you can exercise
- What type of activities you should avoid
- Where to fit your medication into your exercise schedule

Cardio, or aerobic exercise, increases your heart rate and breathing rate. It includes activities like walking, bicycling and water aerobics. The best way to get started is to find an activity

you enjoy. Encourage a friend to join you because you are more likely to keep up with a routine if you work together.

Try going for a walk. Before you start, do some range of motion exercises. That means to move your joints. Then do some light stretches. Set a goal and work towards it. Push yourself, but don’t overdo it. Always stop and rest if you are short of breath and end your walk with more stretching. It is important to drink water before, during and after you exercise.

Keep a record of when you walked and how far you went. It will be rewarding to look back and see how far you have come!

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 us at Molina Health Education at 1-888-483-0760.