

<i>Client:</i>	<i>Date:</i>
<i>Clinician:</i>	

You have been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This is a name given to a group of diseases that limit the flow of air in and out of your lungs, making it harder to breathe. With COPD, you are also more likely to get lung infections. COPD includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema, which are most often caused by heavy, long-term cigarette smoking

**Home Care**

- Break the smoking habit.
  - Enroll in a stop-smoking program to increase your chances of success.
  - Ask your doctor about medications or other methods to help you quit.
  - Ask family members to quit smoking as well.
  - Don't allow people to smoke in your home or when they are around you.
- Protect yourself from infection.
  - Wash your hands often. Do your best to keep your hands away from your face. Most germs are spread from your hands to your mouth.
  - Get a flu shot every year. Ask your doctor about a pneumonia vaccination.
  - Avoid crowds. It's especially important to do this in the winter when more people have colds and flu.
  - Get enough sleep, exercise regularly, and eat a balanced diet.
  - Learn postural drainage and percussion, techniques that can help you cough up extra mucus. This extra mucus can trap germs in your lungs.
- Take your medications exactly as directed. Don't skip doses.
- Stress can make COPD worse. Use these stress-management techniques:
  - Find a quiet place and sit or lie in a comfortable position.
  - Close your eyes and perform breathing exercises for several minutes.

**When to Call Your Nurse or Doctor**

- Shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing
- Increased mucus
- Yellow, green, bloody, or smelly mucus
- Fever or chills
- Tightness in your chest that does not go away with rest or medication
- An irregular heartbeat
- Swollen ankles

Adapted from *Clinical Pathways for the Multidisciplinary Home Care Team Volume 2*

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**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

Contact the on-call nurse if you are experiencing any change in your current health condition.  
 For ALL emergencies requiring IMMEDIATE medical attention, call 911.