

Managing Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), Asthma in Older Adults, and Prevention of Hospital Admission



What Is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a chronic inflammatory lung disease that causes obstructed airflow from the lungs. COPD signs and symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Ongoing cough
- Wheezing or whistling
- Chest tightness or heaviness
- Fatigue¹

What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) condition that affects the airways in the lungs. Asthma signs and symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Difficulty breathing after physical activity or during certain times of the year
- Coughing, especially at night or early morning
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness or pain²

Healthy Reminders:

Severe COPD and asthma attacks can be life-threatening. Work with your doctor to determine what to do when your symptoms worsen. Visit with your doctor about your asthma or COPD at least every six months. This could help prevent an emergency in the future.

COPD and Asthma May Be Managed Through the Following Healthy Habits:

- No smoking
 - If you are struggling to quit smoking, consult your provider for programs and/or products designed to help
- Avoiding secondhand smoke
- Taking medication timely and as prescribed
- Practicing self-care techniques
- Balancing a healthy weight
- Safely increasing physical activity
- Following your provider's orders
- Participating in pulmonary rehabilitation, a specialized program of exercise and education



¹ <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/copd/symptoms>

² <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/asthma>

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Getting Back to Your Best Health

After a hospital or emergency room (ER) visit, recovery can be challenging. There are many things you can do to manage your recovery. The most important is scheduling a follow-up visit with your doctor within seven days of a hospital or ER visit, unless otherwise directed.

You should have a follow-up visit with your primary care doctor within seven days of being released from the hospital. Your clinical team will try to call or contact you after you are discharged to help schedule this visit. It is helpful to bring a list of all current medications and your hospital discharge documentation to your follow-up visit.

At this visit, your doctor can:

- Determine why you were admitted to the hospital
- Review old and new medications
- Answer any of your health-related questions
- Diagnose any new health problems and reevaluate existing conditions
- Refill medications, if needed
- Talk to you about your health and your treatment plan

We're Here to Help

Your doctor may have prescribed new medications, follow-up treatment, or encouraged you to make lifestyle changes. We want to help you navigate these changes through your recovery and beyond. **Our Care Management team has resources that can help you reach your health goals.**

Following your ER visit or hospitalization, your Care Manager can help you with many things, including scheduling your follow-up appointments and transportation assistance. They can also help keep track of your medication and help you manage multiple conditions. Annual wellness visits, virtual visits, and digital care management opportunities with your Care Manager are available upon request.

To learn more, or to sign up for our Case Management program, call us at 1-877-617-0390 (TTY: 1-877-617-0392).