**Self-Management of Flare-ups Guide**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Patient name |  | Date of birth |  |
| Clinician name |  | Signed |  |
| Job title |  | Date |  |
| GP practice |  | Practice Tel No. |  |

If you have COPD you are at risk of getting exacerbations/flare up or chest infections when your symptoms get worse. Your COPD rescue medicines are a supply of standby medications to start if this happens before you are able to see your GP.

It is important to recognise the symptoms early as good treatment taken early can help you get better quicker and reduce further damage to your lungs. Always follow the directions on your medication.

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| **WHEN YOU ARE WELL** | | | |
| **KNOW**   * How much you can do each day * How your breathing is at rest and during activity * What makes your breathing worse * How much you cough and if you produce sputum, what colour is your sputum * How often you use your reliever (blue inhaler) | | **LIFESTYLE TIPS**   * Eat a balanced diet * Stop smoking, avoid triggers * Keep active, exercise as much as you can * Take your medicines as prescribed * Avoid running out of medication * Ensure you have an annual review with your GP | |
| **WARNING SIGNS OF EXACERBATION** | | | |
| **SIGNS**   * Breathlessness – more breathless than usual that interferes with daily activities * Increased volume of sputum (phlegm), is thicker or stickier than normal or it has changed colour to yellow or green | **WHAT TO DO**   * Monitor your symptoms closely * Rest – allow more time for rest * Drink extra fluids and eat regular meals * Increase use of reliever inhaler to 2-4puffs every 4-6hours for 24hours | | **IF NO RESPONSE AFTER 48HRS**   * For breathlessness:   start rescue medication – oral prednisolone   * For change in sputum:   start rescue medication – antibiotics   * For both symptoms: start prednisolone and antibiotics   **Contact your GP surgery if you have used your rescue medication** |
| **SEVERE SYMPTOMS** | | | |
| **SIGNS**   * Very short of breath with NO response to reliever inhaler * Chest pain * High fever (above 38°C) * Feel agitated, panic or fear * Confusion or drowsiness * You develop any other symptoms of concern | | **WHAT TO DO**  **Urgent GP appointment**  **or**  **contact 111 or 999** | |
| **If you are using your rescue medication:**  Continue with your usual medication and contact your GP surgery to book for a post-exacerbation review | | | |