

Managing Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and Asthma in Older Adults

Prevention of Hospital Admission



What Is COPD?¹

COPD is a long-term lung disease that makes it hard to breathe.

COPD signs and symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Coughing

What Is Asthma?²

Asthma is a chronic condition that affects the airways in the lungs.

Asthma signs and symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness or pain
- Wheezing
- Coughing

Healthy Reminders

Severe COPD and asthma attacks are very risky. Working with your doctor to know what to do when your symptoms get worse is crucial.

Signs of a COPD or asthma attack may include:

- Wheezing
- Not getting better after using a quick-relief inhaler
- Breathing problems with little physical activity
- Wheezing that worsens with a cold or the flu

Visit with your doctor about your asthma or COPD at least every six months. This could help prevent an emergency in the future.

Help manage COPD or asthma with these healthy habits:

- Don't smoke. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about programs or products that can help.
- Stay away from other people's smoke.
- Take your medicine as directed.
- Keep a healthy weight.
- Stay active.
- Follow your doctor's orders.
- Start pulmonary rehabilitation. This is a special program with exercise and education.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/copd/index.html>

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

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Getting Back to Your Best Health

After you leave the hospital or emergency room (ER), getting better can be hard. There are lots of things you can do to get healthier. The most important thing is to make an appointment to see your doctor again within seven days of leaving the hospital or ER, unless your doctor tells you differently. Your medical team will try to call you or get in touch with you after you leave the hospital to help you set up this appointment.

It is a good idea to bring a list of all the medicines you are taking and the papers you got when you left the hospital to your follow-up appointment.

At this visit, your doctor can:

- Find out why you were hospitalized.
- Identify any new health issues and reassess existing ones.
- Check your old and new medicines.
- Refill medicines, if needed.
- Answer any health questions you have.
- Discuss 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 1-866-282-6280 (TTY: 711).