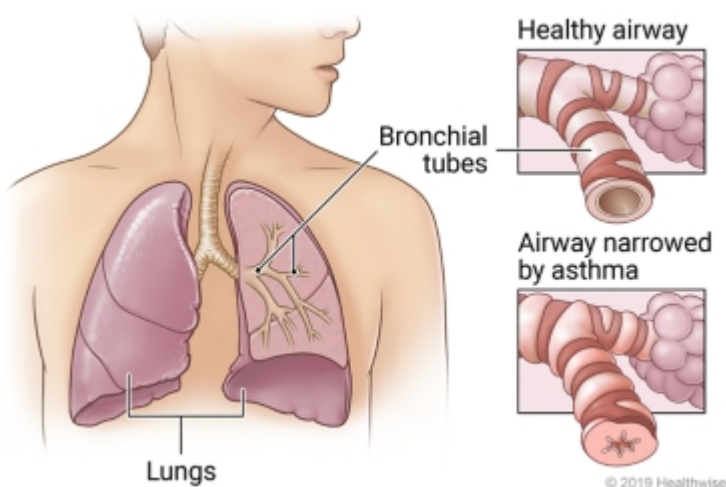


COPD and Asthma: Care Instructions



Your Care Instructions

Some people who have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) also have asthma. Both of these problems can damage your lungs. This makes it very important to control them.

Asthma causes the airways that lead to the lungs to swell and become narrow. This makes it hard to breathe. You may wheeze or cough. If you have a bad attack, you may need emergency care.

There are two parts to treating asthma.

- Controlling asthma over the long term.
- Treating attacks when they occur.

You and your doctor can make an asthma treatment plan that will help. This plan tells you the medicines you take every day to reduce the swelling in your airways and prevent attacks. It also tells you what to do if you have an asthma attack.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

To control asthma over the long term

Medicines

Controller medicines reduce swelling in your lungs. They also prevent asthma attacks. Take your controller medicine exactly as prescribed. Talk to your doctor if you have any problems with your medicine.

- Inhaled corticosteroid is a common and effective controller medicine. Using it the right way can prevent or reduce most side effects.
- Take your controller medicine every day, not just when you have symptoms. This helps prevent problems before they occur.
- Always bring your asthma medicine with you when you travel.
- Your doctor may prescribe long-acting medicine that combines a corticosteroid with a beta2-agonist. Follow your doctor's instructions exactly about how to take a long-acting medicine. Examples include:
 - Fluticasone and salmeterol (Advair).
 - Budesonide and formoterol (Symbicort).
- Do not depend on your controller medicines to stop an asthma attack that has already started. They do not work fast enough to help.
- Your doctor may also prescribe anticholinergic inhalers. These include ipratropium (Atrovent) and tiotropium (Spiriva).

Education

- Learn what sets off an asthma attack. Avoid these triggers when you can. Common triggers include smoke, air pollution, pollen, animal dander, colds, stress, and cold air.
- Do not smoke. Smoking can make COPD and asthma worse. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Check yourself for symptoms to know which step to follow in your action plan. Watch for things like being short of breath, having chest tightness, coughing, and wheezing. Also notice if symptoms wake you up at night or if you get tired quickly when you exercise.
- You may want to learn how to use a peak flow meter. This measures how open your airways are. It may help you know when you will have an asthma attack.

To treat attacks when they occur

Use your asthma action plan when you have an attack. Your quick-relief medicine, such as albuterol, will stop an asthma attack. It relaxes the muscles that get tight around the airways.

- Take your quick-relief medicine exactly as prescribed. Talk with your doctor if you have any problems with your medicine.
- Keep this medicine with you at all times.
- You may need to use this medicine before you exercise.

If your doctor prescribed corticosteroid pills to use during an attack, take them as directed. They may take hours to work, but they may shorten the attack and help you breathe better.

When should you call for help?



Call 911 anytime you think you may need emergency care. For example, call if:

- You have severe trouble breathing.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or worse shortness of breath.
- You are coughing more deeply or more often, especially if you notice more mucus or a change in the color of your mucus.
- You cough up blood.
- You have new or increased swelling in your legs or belly.
- You have a fever.
- You have used your quick-relief medicine but you are still short of breath.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if you have any problems.

Where can you learn more?

Go to <https://www.healthwise.net/patiented>

Enter **A350** in the search box to learn more about "**COPD and Asthma: Care Instructions**".

©2006-2019 Healthwise, Incorporated.

This care instruction is for use with your licensed healthcare professional. If you have questions about a medical condition or this instruction, always ask your healthcare professional. Healthwise, Incorporated disclaims any warranty or liability for your use of this information.