

Help prevent COPD flare-ups

A flare-up is when your symptoms get worse. Your healthcare provider may use the term “exacerbation” to describe a flare-up. Flare-ups may be caused by:

- Airway infections
- Air pollution
- Sometimes the cause is unknown

Get treatment right away if you have a flare-up.



Air pollution may cause flare-ups

Watch for symptoms getting worse

- Watch for symptoms like shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing more than usual. Look for a change in the amount or color of your mucus
- Tell your provider when new symptoms appear
- Ask your provider how you can prevent a flare-up
- Ask your provider what to do if you have a flare-up

If your symptoms change, seek treatment quickly.

Help protect yourself from airway infections

- Ask your provider if you need vaccines (shots) to help prevent flu or pneumonia
- Stay away from friends or coworkers who have a cold or the flu

Education can help you manage your disease

The goal is to help you better manage your COPD. This is done by:

- Learning about your disease
- Learning breathing techniques or exercises
- Taking medicines as directed
- Learning ways to stop smoking
- Learning ways to avoid things that make your COPD worse

For more information, visit these Web sites:

American Lung Association®
www.lung.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

Talk with your healthcare provider about how to help prevent COPD flare-ups.



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