



Fresh Air News

A Special Newsletter for
MVP Health Care® Members

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Handling a Flare-Up

If you have Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), your usual shortness of breath could suddenly get worse. You may start coughing more and have more mucus. This flare-up is called a COPD exacerbation or a COPD attack.

A respiratory tract infection or air pollution could set off an attack. Or it may happen after a quick change in temperature or being around chemicals. You may not always know the cause.

What are the warning signs?

When you have a COPD flare-up, your normal symptoms suddenly get worse.

- You may have more shortness of breath and wheezing.
- You may have more coughing with or without mucus.
- You may have a change in the color or amount of the mucus.
- You may have a fever.
- You may feel very tired.
- You may be depressed or confused.

Don't Panic

Don't panic if you start to have a flare-up. If you are prepared, you may be able to get it under control. Work with your doctor to make a plan for dealing with a COPD attack.

Take your medicines as your doctor says:

- First, use your quick-relief inhaler. If your symptoms don't get better after you use your medicine, have someone take you to the emergency room. Call an ambulance if needed.
- With inhaled medicines, a spacer or a nebulizer may help you get more medicine to your lungs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist how to use them properly. Practice using the spacer in front of a mirror before you have a flare-up. This may help you get the medicine into your lungs quickly.
- If your doctor has given you steroid pills, take them as directed.
- If your doctor prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed. Do not stop taking them just because you feel better. You need to take the full course of antibiotics.
- Call your doctor if you have to use your antibiotic or steroid pills.



Call 911 if you are having chest pain or feel like you are suffocating.

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Help for Caregivers

Helping or caring for a loved one with COPD can feel like a lot to take on. There's the challenge of caregiving, because what seems best for someone isn't always what the person wants to do. There's also the stress of learning how to manage COPD and often other health problems. And just as important is your need for good health and balance in your own life.

How can you learn to be a good caregiver?

Sometimes it can be hard for people to accept help. Or they may choose not to accept help. So you may have to adjust the way you think, ask, listen, and respond. For example, you can:

- Do your best to see things from your loved one's point of view.
- Ask questions like "What do you need help with?" and "How do you like to do this?"
- Offer new ideas gently, such as "Would you like me to do your breathing exercises with you?" instead of "You need to do your breathing exercises."

A main goal of caregiving is to help your loved one have the best quality of life possible. To learn what that means for your loved one, try asking questions like:

- "What do you consider a good day? What can we do to help you have more of them?"
- "What are you looking forward to doing in the next few months? How can we keep your health on track with those plans?"
- "What part of your COPD care is hardest for you right now? How can you and I make that easier on you? Is there something your doctor can help with?"

How can you care for yourself?

Caring for a loved one can be rewarding, but it also can be stressful. It's important to make time for yourself so you don't get overwhelmed.

- Join a caregiver support group.
- Ask other folks for help; check with family members or friends.
- Make sure you take time to have some fun with friends.
- Getting enough sleep, exercising, and eating healthy meals can help you handle stress better.

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MVP has online resources available 24 hours a day to help you take charge of your health.



Make informed decisions about your health by using the Healthwise® Knowledgebase—our online Health Encyclopedia. Curious about the medications you take every day? Visit mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*. The MVP Healthwise Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management, and Prevention of COPD, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD). This program must be coordinated with your physician.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.



Contact Us

For more information, call

1-866-942-7966

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm

TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

We value your opinion.

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at mvplistsens.com. We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.



Quick Tips for Being Prepared to Talk to Your Doctor

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get answered.
- Bring an up to date “health history” list with you.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at **mvphealthcare.com**.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Are you due for important health screenings?

Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit **mvphealthcare.com/preventivecare** and talk to your doctor.