

How to **stay healthy** with COPD

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If you've been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), the advice in this leaflet will help to keep you well and prevent flare-ups of your condition (when your symptoms become worse).

Keeping fit and healthy

Make exercise a regular activity – try to walk every day if possible. People with breathing difficulties sometimes avoid exercise as they worry about becoming breathless. But it is not actually harmful as long as the exercise is introduced gradually and sensibly.

Regular exercise can improve the condition of your lungs and can greatly benefit your wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

Take all of your prescribed medication regularly – speak to your nurse or doctor if you are unsure what to take.

Have a flu vaccine every year – you should also have a pneumonia vaccine once in your lifetime.

Eat well – try to eat a balanced diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables. If eating makes you breathless try to eat smaller meals, sit at a table to eat and use oxygen at meal times if you are prescribed it.

Speak to your GP if you are losing weight unintentionally.

Drink at least four pints of fluid per day – unless you have been told to restrict fluids.

Try to get a good night's sleep.

Changes in the weather

On hot and dry days – use fans, drink plenty, keep cool, use your blue inhaler when feeling breathless and avoid areas with lots of dust or fumes, for example bus stations.

On cold and damp days – avoid being outdoors when misty and damp. Keep warm by wearing a hat, warm coat, gloves and scarf when outdoors. Keep the house warm.



Healthcare
from the **heart** of
your **community**

Be on the lookout for changes and seek help if you become more unwell. Don't forget to read our [Managing COPD flare-ups at home](#) leaflet.

Be careful what you breathe

Stop smoking and avoid smoky places. Your local stop smoking service can help.

Try to avoid places with lots of exhaust fumes.

Avoid dust – use a damp cloth to dust and open windows when dusting or vacuuming.

Open windows if you are using strong smelling cleaners - avoid plug-in or spray air fresheners or candles.

Wear a mask if you are going to do something that creates a lot of dust, for example cleaning out pets' cages, decorating or sanding wood.

Try to avoid people if they have a cough or cold.

Breathing exercises

There are various breathing exercises you can do to help. Please speak to your healthcare professional so they can advise you on the best exercises for you.

Ask your healthcare professional about our pulmonary rehabilitation course.

Avoiding a flare-up

- **Never** running out of medication
- Drinking plenty of fluids
- Taking prescribed medication regularly or as directed
- Eating a healthy diet
- Making sure you attend your regular health review
- Exercising regularly
- Keeping warm in cold weather and cool in warm weather
- Stopping smoking if you are a smoker - The local stop smoking service can help; visit: www.smokefreelifeberkshire.com call: **0800 622 6360**

What to do in an emergency

If you have a COPD flare-up and:

- Are very short of breath even when you are resting
- Feel agitated, fearful, drowsy or confused
- Have chest pain
- Have a high fever,

Contact your GP and request an emergency visit, or the out of hours service on:

If you have a community healthcare professional, contact them on:

If you are very unwell dial 999 for an ambulance.

If you need to go to hospital, please remember to take all of your medication with you.

Please remember that this leaflet is intended as general information only. We aim to make the information as up-to-date and accurate as possible, but please be aware that it is always subject to change. Always check specific advice on any concerns you may have with your doctor.

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