



LET'S TALK ABOUT COPD

Patient-Pharmacist Conversation Record

This document is a summary of the conversation you had with your pharmacist. It will allow you to review important information provided by your pharmacist about your level of risk of developing COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) or your risk of a COPD flare-up if you have already been diagnosed with COPD. It can also be used to support a conversation with your doctor about your health.

These materials were commissioned and funded by AstraZeneca. AstraZeneca have provided an educational grant to FIP to raise awareness and dissemination of this toolkit in line with FIP's mission to advance pharmacy worldwide.

This material is intended for pharmacists with an interest in cardiovascular disease.

What is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease?

It is more than a lung disease.



Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a disease where the airways in your lungs become narrow and blocked, which in turn makes breathing hard.¹ The most common symptom of COPD is being short of breath. Other symptoms may include a constant cough with mucus, frequent chest infections, wheezing, and chest tightness.^{1,2} You may have also heard COPD referred to as chronic bronchitis (disease of the lung airways) and/or emphysema (disease of the lung air sacs).¹

However, COPD is much more than a disease of your lungs. COPD is linked to many other conditions, such as heart disease, depression, and anxiety, because they share the same risk factors. This means that if you have COPD, you are at higher risk for also having other diseases. Conditions such as heart disease, depression, and anxiety increase the risk and severity of COPD, and the reverse is also true.²

People with COPD may experience flare-ups, which occur when symptoms suddenly get worse, making it even harder to breathe.^{1,3} Flare-ups can increase the risk of heart attack, stroke, and early death.⁴ Even a mild COPD flare-up can lead to more flare-ups, causing a lasting effect on your health and quality of life.⁴ But flare-ups are preventable! Continue to partner with your pharmacist, doctor, or medical provider to learn how best to prevent and manage flare-ups.

For patients who may be at risk of developing COPD

Why am I at risk of developing COPD?

COPD was once thought of as a “smoker’s disease.” However, some people who never smoke may also get the disease. It is now known that factors other than smoking make some people more likely to develop COPD.⁵

Did you know that you may be at risk of COPD? This leaflet has been shared with you because your pharmacist thinks you may benefit from a conversation with your doctor about your potential risk. If you do not have a medical provider, ask your pharmacist about next steps. Also consider sharing it with your family. Get information as soon as you can about how to find a doctor or other medical provider.

You may be at risk of developing COPD if you have one or more of the following^{1,2,5,6}

The patient and pharmacist work together to complete 

- Smoking or past smoker
- Long-term exposure to secondhand smoke
- Exposure to dust, fumes, or chemicals at work or at home
- Exposure to air pollution outside your home
- Exposure to indoor air pollution (eg, burning wood, animal dung, or coal in open fires or in poorly functioning stoves in homes)
- Asthma
- Chronic infections (eg, tuberculosis and human immunodeficiency virus [HIV])
- Frequent childhood chest infections
- Poor lung development during childhood
- Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency (AATD)
- Over 40 years of age

Other:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Staff name:

Date:

For patients who have been diagnosed with COPD

Why am I at risk of a COPD flare-up?

Flare-ups are common.⁷ But people with COPD do not always recognise when their symptoms are getting worse.^{7,8}

Did you know that you may be at risk of a COPD flare-up? This leaflet is being shared with you to support a conversation with your doctor about your health. An initial assessment by your pharmacist has indicated that you may be at risk of a COPD flare-up. Your pharmacist can help you document the factors that may put you at risk. If you do not have a medical provider, ask your pharmacist about next steps. Also consider sharing it with your family. Get information as soon as you can about how to find a doctor or other medical provider.

You may be at risk of a COPD flare-up if you have one or more of the following^{2,4,6}

The patient and pharmacist work together to complete 

- Had a flare-up in the past (you had an increase in symptoms that meant you had to take an antibiotic or an oral corticosteroid [eg, prednisone], go to the emergency room, and/or stay in the hospital)
- Increased symptoms that are impacting quality of life
- Still smoking
- Increased exposure to dust, fumes, or chemicals at work or at home
- Increased exposure to air pollution outside your home
- Increased exposure to indoor air pollution (eg, burning wood, animal dung, or coal in open fires or in poorly functioning stoves in homes)
- Uncontrolled asthma
- Respiratory infection (eg, cold, flu, COVID-19, sinus infection)
- Presence or worsening of other diseases (eg, heart disease, depression, or anxiety)
- Harder to breathe due to sudden changes in weather and temperature

Other:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Comments:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Staff name:

Date:

Why is it important to report your symptoms?

The most common symptoms of COPD may be mild at first and go unnoticed. It is estimated that, more than half of people with COPD don't even know they have it.⁹

People with COPD often get used to their symptoms changing.¹⁰ Thus, they may not recognise or report when symptoms are different than their normal day-to-day symptoms and may simply choose to cope with them.^{7,8,10}

Since COPD can impact more than your lungs, symptoms should be reported to your pharmacist or doctor as soon as they occur so they don't worsen and impact your quality of life.

I am a patient who is:

- at risk of developing COPD.**
I have these symptoms^{1,2}:
- diagnosed with COPD and at risk of flare-ups.**
These symptoms are new and/or getting worse^{1,2}:

The patient and pharmacist work together to complete 

- Short of breath more than usual, and gets worse with physical activity
- Coughing more than usual
- Producing phlegm (mucus) more than usual
- Frequent chest infections (eg, bronchitis, pneumonia)
- Feeling wheezy more than usual
- Chest tightness, especially after physical effort
- Feeling tired or drained of energy

Other symptoms:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Comments:

.....

.....

.....

.....

Staff name:

Date:

Why is it so important to get checked?

COPD is a progressive disease, meaning the damage to your lungs can't be reversed and may get worse over time.¹ It's important that COPD is diagnosed early and that COPD flare-ups are detected and treated as soon as possible to control further lung damage and prevent serious complications.^{2,9}



COPD – Getting diagnosed early

A simple lung test known as spirometry is used to diagnose COPD. This test allows your doctor or other medical provider to measure the volume, amount, and speed of inhaled and exhaled air relative to time. They will then compare your result to reference values based on age, height, and gender to see if your lungs are working at their best.^{2,9}



COPD – Frequent check-ins for flare-ups

Because there are no routine tests to diagnose flare-ups, they are usually diagnosed based on your symptoms and after other causes, such as heart disease, are ruled out.^{2,4} So, it is really important to check in with your pharmacist, doctor, or other medical provider if you think your COPD symptoms are getting worse.


What can you do to reduce your risk of COPD or COPD flare-ups?



What you can do now⁹:

-  Quit smoking
-  Avoid exposure to secondhand smoke
-  Use masks to avoid air pollution, industrial dusts, and chemicals
-  Choose well-ventilated spaces whenever possible
-  Be physically active as much as possible
-  Eat a healthy diet
-  Report any new or worsening symptoms

Ask your pharmacist or doctor about the following:

-  Ways to help you stop smoking
-  Vaccination
-  How to properly take your COPD medications and why you are using them
-  Your current inhaler technique
-  Tips to help you remember to take your COPD medications
-  Ways to be physically active if you have breathing issues
-  Benefits of a pulmonary rehabilitation programme
-  Ways to keep other diseases well managed
-  Creating a personalised COPD Action Plan

C O P D

- **Check** your lung function with a spirometry test
- **Optimise** the use of your medications
- **Prioritise** staying active and not smoking
- **Discuss** your risk with your healthcare professional

References

1. Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP). What is COPD? Available at: <https://gaapp.org/diseases/copd/>. Accessed August 2024.
2. Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD). Global strategy for the diagnosis, management and prevention of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (2024 report). Available at: <https://goldcopd.org/2024-gold-report>. Accessed August 2024.
3. AstraZeneca. COPD Flare-Up Checklist. Available at: <https://www.conosur.astrazeneca.com/content/dam/microsites/actoncopd-uk/en/COPD-flare-up-checklist.pdf>. Accessed August 2024.
4. Hurst JR et al. *Eur J Int Med*. 2020;73:1-6.
5. American Lung Association. COPD causes and risk factors. Available at: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/copd/what-causes-copd>. Accessed August 2024.
6. American Lung Association. Prevent COPD Exacerbations or Flare Ups. Available at: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/copd/living-with-copd/prevent-flare-ups>. Accessed August 2024.
7. Singh D et al. *International Journal of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease*. 2021;16:3009–3016.
8. Barnes N et al. *BMC Pulm Med*. 2013;13:54.
9. Global Allergy and Airways Patient Platform (GAAPP). Empowerment guide for patients with COPD. Available at: https://gaapp-images.s3.amazonaws.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/31235059/ENG_COPD_empGuide_SV.pdf. Accessed August 2024.
10. Wedzicha JA, Donaldson GC. *Respir Care*. 2003;48(12):1204-1215.

Supported by



Z4-66236 08/24

