

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Discharge Information

What is chronic obstructive pulmonary disease?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a serious lung disease that over time makes it hard to breathe. It is most commonly caused by smoking cigarettes for many years. In COPD, two things happen. First, the airways are partly blocked by mucus. Airways are the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs. Second, lung tissue is destroyed. Lung tissue is where oxygen enters the blood and carbon dioxide is passed from the blood to the lungs. Both mucus and the loss of lung tissue make it hard to breathe. The 2 types of COPD are chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Many patients have a combination of both.

How can I take care of myself when I go home?

COPD cannot be cured. Once you have COPD, it does not get better, but taking good care of yourself is the best way to keep it from getting worse. The goals of COPD treatment are to:

- Relieve symptoms to help you breathe better and feel better
- Help you be more physically active
- Treat infections when they happen
- Help prevent complications
- Help prevent the condition from getting worse

Management

- Your provider will give you a list of your medicines when you leave the hospital.
 - Know your medicines. Know what they look like, how much you should take each time, how often you should take them, and why you take each one.
 - Take your medicines exactly as your provider tells you to.
 - Carry a list of your medicines in your wallet or purse. Include any nonprescription medicines and supplements on the list.
- Your provider may prescribe medicine to:
 - Relax and open the airways
 - Reduce swelling in your lungs
 - Loosen the mucus in your lungs and help you cough it up
 - Treat or prevent an infection
 - Make breathing easier

Appointments

- Follow your provider's instructions for follow-up appointments.
- Keep appointments for all routine testing you may need.

- Talk with your provider about any questions or fears you have.

Diet, Exercise, and Other Lifestyle Changes

- Follow the treatment plan your healthcare provider prescribes.
- Get plenty of rest while you're recovering. Try to get at least 7 to 9 hours of sleep each night.
- Eat a healthy diet.
- Drink enough fluids to keep your urine light yellow in color, unless you are told to limit fluids.
- Exercise as your provider recommends.
- Don't smoke. Smoking can worsen lung disease.
- Avoid secondhand smoke, air pollution, and extreme changes in temperature and humidity.
- Ask about getting flu and pneumonia vaccinations to help prevent lung infections.
- Avoid close contact with people who have colds or the flu.
- If you plan to travel, discuss your plans with your healthcare provider.
- You may need to continue a rehabilitation program after you leave the hospital to help you adjust to life with COPD. A pulmonary rehabilitation program can help you learn how to live and feel better with COPD. The program will give you information about exercise and a healthy diet. It can help you learn how your lungs work and how to care for your COPD.
- Find ways to make your life less stressful.

Call emergency medical services or 911 if you have new or worsening:

- Trouble talking or walking because of shortness of breath
- Bluish or gray color of your lips or fingernails
- Trouble breathing that does not get easier with medicine
- Fast breathing or trouble catching your breath
- Feeling like you are going to die
- Chest discomfort (pressure, fullness, squeezing or pain) that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back or chest discomfort that goes to your arms, neck, jaw or back

If you have any of these symptoms, do not drive yourself.

Call your healthcare provider if you have new or worsening:

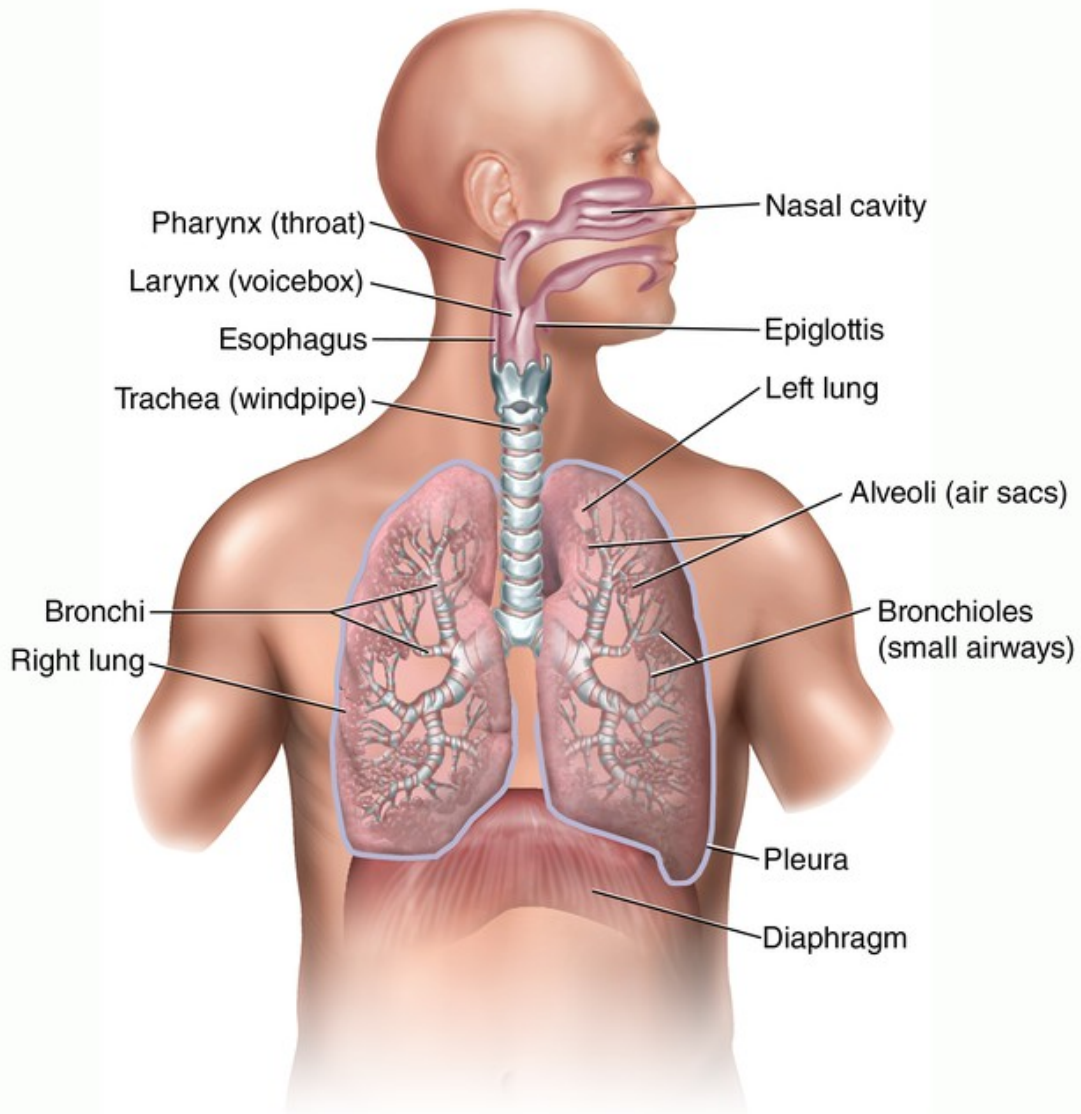
- Chest pain when you take a breath
- Fever higher than 101.5° F (38.6° C)
- Coughing up mucus that is thick or blood-stained
- Shortness of breath
- Signs of infection around your surgical wound if you had surgery. These include:
 - The area around your wound is more red or painful
 - Your wound area is very warm to touch

- You have blood, pus, or other fluid coming from the wound area
- You have chills or muscle aches

Developed by RelayHealth.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

Respiratory System

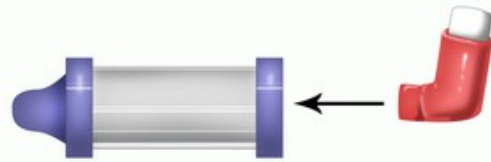


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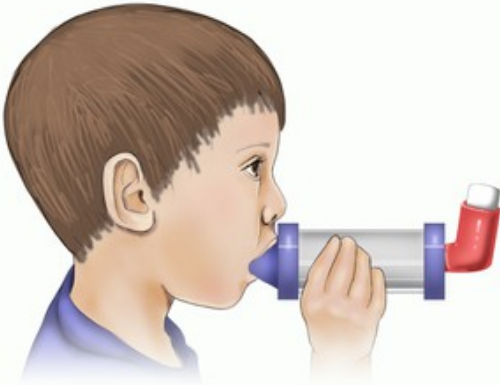
Metered-Dose Inhaler: How to Use with a Spacer



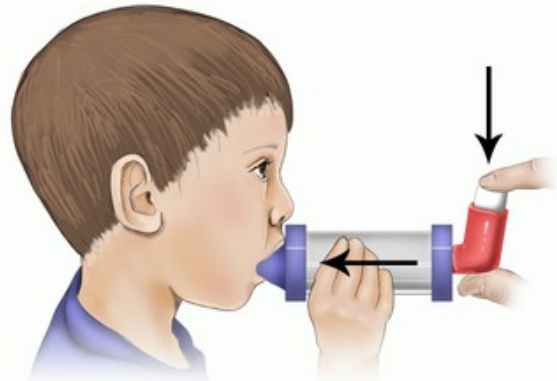
1. Shake the medicine.



2. Insert the mouthpiece of the inhaler into the rubber-sealed end of the spacer.



3. Breathe all of the air out of your lungs. Then put the spacer into your mouth between your teeth. Make a tight seal around the mouthpiece with your lips.



4. Press the metered-dose inhaler down once to release a spray of medicine. The medicine will be trapped in the spacer. Breathe in slowly and deeply.



5. Hold your breath for 5 to 10 seconds and then breathe out slowly. If you cannot hold your breath, another method is to breathe in and out slowly for 3 to 5 breaths.

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Metered-Dose Inhaler: How to Use



1. Shake the medicine.



Or



2a. Hold the inhaler so that the mouthpiece is 1 and 1/2 to 2 inches (about 2 to 3 finger widths) in front of your open mouth. Breathe out normally. Press the inhaler down once so it releases a spray of medicine into your mouth while you breathe in slowly. Continue to breathe in as slowly and deeply as possible.

2b. If holding the inhaler in front of your mouth is too hard, breathe out all the way and then place the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it. Press the inhaler down once to release a spray of medicine into your mouth while you breathe in slowly.



3. Hold your breath for 10 seconds, or as long as is comfortable. Breathe out slowly.

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How to Use a Nebulizer



1. Put medicine into the medicine cup.



2. Attach the mouthpiece or mask to the medicine cup.



3. Attach the medicine cup to the compressor tubing.



4. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth or place the face mask over your nose and mouth. Breathe through your mouth until all of the medicine is gone.

Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you should wear gloves when you use a nebulizer to give medicine to someone else.

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