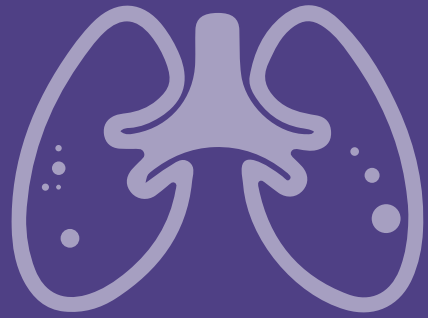


Living with COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) can affect every part of your life. While there is no cure, there are things you can do to help manage COPD. Take an active role in treating COPD by talking to your provider.



COPD can harm the following areas of your life:



Your provider diagnosed you with COPD. MeridianComplete (Medicare-Medicaid Plan) wants to help you stay healthy and manage your health. Here is what you can do to manage your health:



Quit smoking

- If you smoke, quitting is the most important thing you can do
- Ask your provider about ways to help you quit smoking



Talk with your provider

- Tell your provider at every visit about your symptoms or any flare-ups
- Report any changes in your activity level
- Bring your medications to every provider visit
- Tell your provider if you are feeling down or anxious about your COPD
- Work with your provider to create goals of care



Do your part

- Learn about COPD
- Learn about your medications
- Take your medications as directed
- Keep provider appointments
- Ask for support from your family and friends, or join a support group
- Follow an exercise program as recommended by your provider
- Eat healthy foods
- Talk to your provider about whether you need the flu or pneumonia vaccine
- Stay away from things that irritate your lungs such as cigarette smoke, pollen and dust

Take an active role in managing COPD.

Preventing Flare-Ups



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

- Airway infections
- Air pollution
- Other unknown causes

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

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 a flare-up happens

If your symptoms change, seek treatment quickly.

Help protect yourself from airway infections

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

Education can help you manage this disease

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

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

For more information, visit these websites:



American Lung Association®

www.lung.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

www.nhlbi.nih.gov

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

Treating COPD

There are a number of treatments that may help your breathing. Talk with your provider about which treatment is right for you. If you are still smoking, the most important thing you can do is quit.

Daily medication

- Most are inhaled medications that you take every day to help manage COPD
- It is important to use your daily maintenance medication every day, even if you are feeling fine, unless you are directed to stop by your provider
- Some of these medications may help prevent flare-ups

Short-acting rescue medication

- Most are inhaled medications you use when your breathing suddenly gets worse
- Your provider will tell you when and how to use a short-acting rescue medication
- It is very important that you always carry your rescue inhaler with you for sudden symptoms of COPD

Other steps to take

- Get preventive vaccines, like the flu shot
- Ask your provider for supplemental oxygen if needed
- Discuss pulmonary rehabilitation with your provider

Exercise and diet

- Exercising may help increase your strength to do everyday activities
- Your provider or respiratory healthcare professional can show you the right exercises and how to do them safely
- Ask your provider or dietitian to review your diet and help plan meals that are right for you

Pulmonary rehabilitation

- Provides you with education and support through teaching you exercises and breathing techniques to help manage your COPD
- Talk with your provider to see if you would benefit from this kind of program

Oxygen

- Patients with more severe COPD may benefit from oxygen therapy
- If your oxygen level is low, you may need extra oxygen to help you breathe better

MeridianComplete is a health plan that contracts with both Medicare and Illinois Medicaid to provide benefits of both programs to enrollees.

ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call **1-855-580-1689** (TTY: **711**).

ATENCIÓN: si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al **1-855-580-1689** (TTY: **711**).

