

Contact us

Respiratory and Home Oxygen Assessment Service

Oxford office: 01865 904 418

Banbury office: 01295 229 501

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

Concerns and complaints

We aim to provide you with a high quality service at all times. However, if you have any concerns, complaints or comments about your experience of our service then please tell a member of the team or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on freephone 0800 328 7971.

If you would like to have information translated into a different language, please contact the Equality and Diversity Team at: EqualityandInclusion@oxfordhealth.nhs.uk

Arabic يُرجى الاتصال بنا إذا كنتم ترغبون في الحصول على

المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بتسبيق مختلف.

Bengali আপনি এই তথ্য অন্য ভাষায় বা আলাদা আকারে

পেতে চাইলে অনুগ্রহ করে আমাদের সাথে যোগাযোগ করুন।

Urdu اگر آپ یہ معلومات دیگر زبان یا مختلف فارمیٹ میں چاہتے

ہیں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے رابطہ کریں۔

Chinese 若要以其他語言或格式提供這些資訊，

請與我們聯繫

Polish Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, skontaktuj się z nami.

Portuguese Queira contactar-nos se pretender as informações noutro idioma ou num formato diferente.

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NHS

Oxford Health
NHS Foundation Trust

Managing flare-ups of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)

Respiratory and home oxygen

Please read this leaflet and contact our service if you have any questions or concerns.

What is a flare-up?

Many people with COPD have times when their usual symptoms become worse, for example finding it harder to breathe. This is called an exacerbation or 'flare-up'. This can often happen when the weather suddenly gets colder.

Recognising a flare-up

These are the symptoms that you might experience:

- worsening shortness of breath
- worsening cough
- increased sputum (phlegm)
- changes in the colour of sputum (phlegm)
- increased tiredness
- developing a temperature and fever
- developing a cold or viral infection
- decrease in your usual activity
- more breathless than normal while doing usual activities

Step 1: Increase your reliever inhaler (blue)

Starting your treatment as quickly as possible may help you to recover faster.

This will relieve breathlessness. Always use a spacer if you have one. It may be that you will need to use this inhaler every two to three hours.

Step 2: If breathlessness is not relieved by step 1

Speak to your doctor or nurse about how much you can increase your blue inhaler and use this more regularly.

Start prednisolone (steroid) tablets.

Take 6 x 5mg tablets all together. It does not matter at what time of the day.

Then complete the course by taking six tablets in the morning for the following six days.

Step 3: Starting antibiotics

Only take antibiotics if you have changes in the colour of your sputum (phlegm).

These may be amoxicillin or another antibiotic prescribed by your GP.

Follow the instructions on your tablets and make sure you complete the course.

Step 4: Inform your GP

Inform your GP when you start the stand-by medication.

If after two days you do not feel any better, please contact your GP.

When to seek help:

- if your breathing is not improving
- if you cough up any blood
- if you notice new or worsening ankle swelling, especially if it doesn't go down overnight
- if you get any new chest pain
- if you have any new confusion or drowsiness
- if you cannot cope with this flare-up alone

Arrange a repeat prescription for the stand-by medication used. You will always need to keep a stock at home.

It is helpful to keep note of the dates when you require your stand-by medications.