

# COPD Self-Management Plan

- If you smoke, take steps to quit
- Take all medications only as prescribed
- Know and avoid your triggers as much as possible
- Maintain a healthy weight

## Green Flags – All Clear

## What this means ...



### If you have:

- No cough or shortness of breath
- No wheezing
- No chest tightness
- No decrease in your ability to maintain your activity level

- Your symptoms are under control
- Continue taking your medications as ordered.
- Continue regular activity as tolerated
- Follow a low salt diet
- Wear oxygen if prescribed
- Keep all physician appointments

Keep up the great work!

## Yellow Flags – Caution

## What this means ...



### If you have any of the following:

- Increased cough and/or sputum and symptoms
- Increase in shortness of breath with usual activity level
- Increase in the amount of quick relief medications used
- Change in usual energy level: Increase in either tiredness or restlessness
- Increased number of pillows needed to sleep or need to sleep in arm chair
- Swelling of ankles more than usual
- Experience chest tightness
- Anything else that bothers you

- Continue taking daily medications
- Use oxygen if prescribed
- You may need a medication adjustment.

**Call your doctor, consulting nurse, or health care provider if symptoms do not improve.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Instructions:**

If you notice a Yellow Flag, work closely with your health care team

## Red Flags – Stop and Think

## What this means ...



### If you have:

- Unrelieved shortness of breath
- Shortness of breath at rest
- Unrelieved chest pain/chest tightness
- Fever or shaking chills
- Wheezing or chest tightness at rest
- Need to sit in chair to sleep
- Increased or irregular heart beat
- Changes in color of your skin, nail beds, or lips to gray or blue
- Confusion
- Coughing up blood

This indicates that you need to be seen by a call physician right away

**If possible, notify your health care provider's office.**

**Name:**

**Number:**

**Follow these instructions: CALL 9-1-1**

If you notice a Red Flag, call your physician immediately.

# Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

## Fast Facts

- COPD is a broad term that includes two respiratory illnesses, chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema.
- It is a slow progressive disease when there is an obstruction of air getting into or out of the lungs. The ability to breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide is affected.
- Symptoms include cough, chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and wheezing.
- Stages range from stage I to stage IV. Stage IV is known as “end-stage” COPD.
- When managing a chronic condition like COPD, people may feel depressed or anxious.

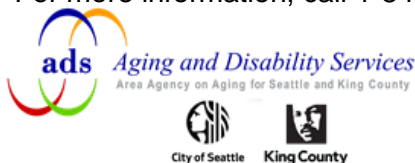
## What can you do?

- Avoid things that can irritate your lungs, such as smoke, pollution, and air that is cold and dry
- Use an air conditioner or air filter in your home
- Take rest breaks during the day
- Get regular exercise to stay as strong as you can
- Eat a healthy diet. If you are under or overweight, talk with your health care provider.
- Take medications as prescribed by your health care provider, this includes using any inhalers as directed by your health care provider
- Keep a list of all your medications and go over this list with your health care provider at clinic appointments.
- Managing a chronic condition like COPD, people cause you to feel depressed or anxious. Talk with your health care provider if you have depression and anxiety as counseling, medicine, and support groups can help you cope.
- If you smoke, consider quitting.
- Get a flu vaccine every year
- Talk with our medical provider about a pneumonia shot

## Aging and Disability Services

Aging and Disability Services (ADS)—the Area Agency on Aging for King County— plans, coordinates, and advocates for comprehensive services for older adults, family caregivers, and people with disabilities throughout Seattle and King County.

For more information, call 1-844-348-5464 or e-mail [info@communitylivingconnections.org](mailto:info@communitylivingconnections.org)



Aging and Disability Services  
700 Fifth Avenue, 51st Floor • PO Box 34215  
Seattle, WA 98124-4215  
Tel: 206-684-0660 • TTY: 206- 684-0702  
[aginginfo@seattle.gov](mailto:aginginfo@seattle.gov)

[www.agingkingcounty.org](http://www.agingkingcounty.org)