

Recognizing Signs of Worsening COPD

There are signs that indicate a worsening in your lung condition. You need to recognize and discuss these symptoms with your doctor. **Call your doctor if you notice:**

- Changes in the amount or colour to brown, yellow, or green or presence of blood in your sputum
- Any unusual INCREASE in the severity of breathlessness, coughing, or wheezing which requires more quick relief medication
- New episodes of shortness of breath at night
- An unaccountable INCREASE or DECREASE in weight, especially swelling in the ankles
- Increasing fatigue and lack of energy or persistent feeling of being unwell
- A fever or chills
- Chest pain
- Heart palpitations
- Frequent morning headaches, dizzy spells, restlessness, insomnia
- Your current treatments are not working
- Confusion, disorientation, slurring of speech
- Side effects that you think are caused by one of the prescribed medications
- If you think a medication is not helping you or if you are consistently using more than prescribed

By recognizing signs early, you can begin treatment sooner. It is better to call the doctor than to wait until you feel so bad that you have to make a trip to emergency.

If you call the doctor or go to emergency, bring your list of medications and other pertinent information. Have it written down so you don't have to talk when breathless.

Tips to stay healthy:

1. *Avoid contact with people who are coughing and sneezing.*
2. *Seek early treatment for your lung illness.*
3. *Ask your doctor about getting a pneumonia vaccination and an annual flu vaccination.*
4. *Before taking over the counter medication, discuss with a pharmacist. Even common drugs like cough medicine, painkillers, aspirin, sleeping pills, or drugs for allergies can be harmful unless supervised by your doctor.*
5. *Have regular check ups.*