

Respiratory Disease

Symptom Awareness & Action Plan



It is recommended that patients and physicians or health care providers complete this action plan together. This plan should be discussed at each physician visit and updated as needed. The green, yellow and red zones show groups of symptoms of COPD. The list of symptoms is not comprehensive, and you may experience other symptoms. In the "Actions" column, your healthcare provider will recommend actions for you to take based on your symptoms by checking the appropriate boxes. Your healthcare provider may write down other actions in addition to those listed here.

Green Zone: I am doing well today

- Usual activity and exercise level
- Usual amounts of cough and phlegm/mucus
- Sleep well at night
- Appetite is good
- No shortness of breath
- No need to use rescue inhaler



Actions

- Take daily medicines
- Use oxygen as prescribed
- Continue regular exercise/diet plan
- At all times avoid cigarette smoke, inhaled irritants*
- Continue using your inhaler and/or nebulizer
- _____

Yellow Zone: I am having a bad day

- More breathless than usual
- less energy for my daily activities
- Increased or thicker phlegm/mucus
- Using quick relief inhaler/nebulizer more often
- Swelling of ankles more than usual
- More coughing than usual
- I feel like I have a "chest cold"
- Poor sleep and my symptoms woke me up
- My appetite is not good
- My medicine is not helping
- Irritability, confusion, headaches



Actions

- Continue daily medication
- Use quick relief inhaler every _____ hours
- Start an oral corticosteroid (*specify name, dose and duration*)

- Start an antibiotic (*specify name, dose and duration*)

- Use oxygen as prescribed
- Get plenty of rest
- Use pursed lip breathing
- At all times avoid cigarette smoke, inhaled irritants*
- Call provider immediately if symptoms don't improve*

Red Zone: I need urgent medical care

- Severe shortness of breath, even at rest; unrelieved shortness of breath
- Not able to do any activity because of difficulty breathing
- Not able to sleep because of breathing
- Fever or shaking chills
- Feeling confused or very drowsy, fainting, falling
- Chest pains
- Coughing up blood
- Wheezing, chest tightness at rest



Actions

CALL 9-1-1 
or seek medical care immediately

- While getting help, immediately do the following:

*The American Lung Association recommends that the providers select this action for all patients. The information contained in this document is for educational use only. It should not be used as a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. For more information, visit www.Lung.org or call 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872) © 2012 American Lung Association. October 2012