

RECOGNISING EXACERBATIONS IN CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE AIRWAY DISEASE



WHAT IS AN EXACERBATION?

An exacerbation is also known as a "flare up", and it occurs when your lung condition gets worse. It can become serious and you may need to see a doctor or go to a hospital.

Typical signs and symptoms of a flare up could be one or more of the following:



Worsening breathlessness or wheeze



More or persistent cough



More or change in colour of sputum



Taking more reliever medication



Loss of appetite or sleep

HOW DO YOU PREVENT A FLARE UP?

- Avoid triggers such as second-hand smoke, strong cleaning products or perfumes
- Get your scheduled vaccinations
- Eat healthy, stay active and have enough sleep
- Take your prescribed maintenance inhalers and medications regularly
- Maintain good hand hygiene
- Avoid people who have a cold and flu or wear a mask when you are in close contact with people when they are unwell
- Recognise your symptoms

USING A "TRAFFIC LIGHT APPROACH" TO MONITOR YOUR SYMPTOMS

	Well	Worse	Danger
How you feel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usual activity level • Usual amount of phlegm and cough • Usual color of phlegm • Good appetite 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More breathless than usual • More phlegm than usual • Phlegm's colour is darker than usual • More cough than usual • Poor appetite • Less energy for your daily activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme breathlessness (hard to breathe) • Unable to sleep and do any activities due to breathlessness • Coughing out blood • Fever, confusion and drowsiness • You are not getting better even after using the rescue pack (if prescribed)
Action	<p>Take the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your prescribed inhalers and medications daily • Avoid smoking • Maintain your usual physical activities • Ensure that your vaccines are up-to-date • Attend your scheduled appointments 	<p>Take the following actions for next 7 to 14 days. If your symptoms improve, follow the actions in the green zone on the left.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If you are more breathless than usual: Start two puffs of Ventolin *maximum six times a day 2. If you do not see any improvement in your symptoms within the next three days: <p>If you have a Rescue Pack:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Activate <u>Rescue Pack standby medication</u>: Start prednisolone tablet and complete the medication as prescribed by your doctor b) If your phlegm becomes yellowish/ greenish: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activate <u>Rescue Pack standby medication</u> within three days of a change in symptoms: start antibiotics and complete the medication as prescribed by your doctor <p>If you do not have a Rescue Pack: see a doctor to get a prescription for your medications</p>	<p>Please see your doctor immediately and do not wait.</p> <p>If your symptoms do not get better, you must go to the emergency department (ED).</p> <p>Please call 995 for an ambulance if needed.</p> <p>**Take four puffs of Ventolin every 10 minutes until you get to the nearest ED.</p>

Air Master by

