DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing COPD

Being diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) may feel a little daunting, but there are things you can do to manage the condition effectively. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know
Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here’s what they mean.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alpha-1-antitrypsin</td>
<td>A protein made in the liver that helps protect the lungs. A genetic disorder can cause a lack of the protein, which can, in turn, lead to COPD.</td>
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<td>Bronchodilators</td>
<td>Medications used to relax the muscles around your breathing tubes, allowing them to expand easier. These include beta2-agonists, anticholinergics, and theophylline.</td>
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<td>Chronic Bronchitis</td>
<td>A type of COPD that happens when the bronchial tubes in your lungs swell, causing them to produce a lot of mucus and narrow the airway.</td>
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<td>Emphysema</td>
<td>A type of COPD that occurs when the alveoli (air sacs in your lungs) are damaged.</td>
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<td>Exacerbations</td>
<td>Episodes where your COPD symptoms are worse than usual.</td>
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<td>Pulmonary Hypertension</td>
<td>When the blood pressure inside the lung arteries is abnormally high.</td>
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<td>Pulmonary Rehabilitation</td>
<td>An educational program that teaches those with COPD (and other chronic lung conditions) how to improve their quality of life through diet, exercise, and other strategies for managing COPD on a daily basis.</td>
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<td>Spirometry</td>
<td>A test used to measure lung function and detect COPD.</td>
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Questions to Ask

These questions will help you start a conversation with your doctor about how to best manage your COPD.

About Symptoms

- What symptoms are normal, and when should I call you with concerns?
- Apart from smoking, what things can aggravate my COPD symptoms?
- Will my symptoms change or get worse over time? If so, how?

About Causes & Risk Factors

- Do you know what caused my COPD?
- Are there other causes of COPD besides smoking cigarettes?
- How can I prevent lung infections?
- What vaccines do I need to protect me from respiratory infections? Should I get a flu shot or the pneumonia vaccine?

About Diagnosis

- What do the results of my lung function test mean?
- Will I need to do any other tests to confirm my COPD diagnosis?
- What stage of COPD am I in?

About Treatment

- Is there anything I can do or take to help me breathe easier or cough less?
- What medicine should I take when I feel like my breathing is worse than normal? How often can I safely take it?
- What side effects can I expect from my medication(s), and what things should I watch out for?
- Will I need surgery?
- Will I need to be on oxygen?
- How do I know I’m using my inhaler correctly? Do I need to use a spacer?
About Coping

- Where can I go to get help quitting smoking?
- Will switching to e-cigarettes help my symptoms?
- Should I consider pulmonary rehabilitation?
- What support groups are available in the area for people with COPD?
- What can I do to make the air I breathe cleaner in my home or workplace?

About Living With COPD

- What changes can I make to my diet to give me more energy?
- Are there any exercises that will help my lungs get stronger or improve my breathing?
- Is there anything special I need to take or do while traveling, especially by plane?
- Can I still smoke sometimes or be around people who smoke?
- Will my pets make my symptoms worse?