COPD Action Plan

Green Zone: “I feel well today.”

- I am active and breathing as usual.
- I have the usual amount of mucus. No change in color.
- My appetite is good.
- I sleep well at night.

Action: What to do

- Take your usual medicine each day.
- Do all the things you normally do each day.
- Don't smoke. Avoid all things that bother your lungs.
- Eat good foods.

Yellow Zone: “I don’t feel well. I’m having a bad COPD day.”

- I’m more breathless or wheezy than usual. I may be coughing more, too.
- I’m more tired than usual. I can’t do normal activities.
- I have more mucus. It’s thicker and darker than usual.
- I need to use my inhaler or nebulizer more than usual.
- My appetite is not good.
- I don’t sleep well.

Action: What to do

- Take your usual medicine each day.
- Take other medicines if your doctor says so. He or she might tell you to take short-acting medicine. Or you might need an antibiotic or prednisone.
- Try to control your breathing. Pursed lip breathing can help. It uses less energy and helps you relax.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Don’t eat a big meal. Eat a little bit at a time and eat more often. If your doctor says it’s OK, drink plenty of fluids.
- Call your doctor if:
  - Your symptoms don’t get better within 48 hours.
  - Or, your symptoms get worse.

Red Zone: “I need medical care right away. It’s urgent!”

- I’m having a hard time breathing.
- I can’t do normal activities.
- I can’t sleep because it’s hard to breathe.
- I have a high fever. Or, I have chills and I’m shaking.
- I feel confused. Or, I feel very sleepy.
- I have chest pain.
- I’m having trouble talking.

Action: What to do

- Call 911 now! This is an emergency. You need care now.
- Call your emergency contact. Or, have someone do this for you. The contact is listed above.
- Follow all of your doctor’s Red Zone orders.

Notes: __________________________
Take care of your COPD. These tips can help:

- Work with your doctor. Don't miss visits.
- Take your medicines. Take them the way your doctor tells you to.
- Quit smoking. Stay away from other people’s smoke.
- Avoid things that make your symptoms worse.
- Get your vaccines. Ask your doctor if flu or pneumonia shots are right for you.
- Use your action plan. Follow the action steps if your symptoms get worse.
- Write things down that you will share with your doctor:
  - How you feel each day.
  - What makes your COPD worse.
  - Questions you want to ask at your next visit.

Use this handy chart…

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Exercise for _____ minutes each day – all at one time or broken up into _____ minutes at a time.
I can do the following types of exercises:

When you’re short of breath

Practice these techniques before you need them. Remember, your doctor can show you how to do them too.

**Pursed lip breathing.** Helps keep your airways open and slows your breathing down. It allows trapped air to leave your lungs and lets fresh air in.

Take one simple step at a time:
1. Relax your neck and shoulders.
2. Slowly breathe in through your nose. Keep your lips closed. Count to 2 or 3.
3. Pucker your lips as if you’re going to whistle. Slowly breathe out. Count to 5 or 6.

Some positions that can help you catch your breath:
- Sit with your head and shoulders dropping forward.
- Sit with a pillow at a table. Rest your head and arms on the pillow.
- Stand, leaning on a counter or table.
- Stand with your back against the wall, feet apart, relaxing head and shoulders.

Sources: National Institutes of Health, American Lung Association, Canadian Lung Association

Additional informational resources:

- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
  Information Center
  www.nhlbi.nih.gov | 1-301-592-8573

- National Jewish Health
  www.njc.org | 1-800-222-LUNG (1-800-222-5864)

- American Lung Association
  www.lungusa.org | 1-800-LUNG-USA (1-800-586-4872)

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OA100-6689 MBU301204-50828-000001A