This book was created for patients and their families to help them manage their lung disease.

Your doctor or nurse chose this section because they felt it would be most helpful for you.

There are 10 sections in the COPD book and a list of definitions in the glossary section. Share this information with family, friends and those who help care for you.
Saving Your Energy

Because of your COPD, you will need to make some lifestyle changes. Saving energy, also called **energy conservation**, is an important step.

Here are some ways you can save your energy every day:

**Decide what needs to get done**

- Ask yourself what is most important to you.
- Think about what you need to do today.
- Skip the things that aren't as important.

**Plan ahead**

- Make a schedule. Be sure to plan time for activities and rest breaks.
- Think about what time of the day you have the most energy — morning or afternoon?
- Do your hardest tasks when you have the most energy.
- Give yourself time to get extra rest before an important event.
- Avoid doing tasks when it is very hot or cold since it uses more energy.

- Have things ready before you begin a task.
- Think about what you may need from upstairs before going downstairs (so that you do not have to make extra trips up and down stairs).
- Schedule plenty of time—rushing requires more energy!

**Take a break**

- Schedule rest periods into your day.
- Spend some time with your legs raised to prevent swelling in your ankles.
- After you do a chore that uses a lot of energy, do a task that uses less energy like paying bills, reading or making phone calls.
- When walking, stop if you begin to feel tired or have trouble breathing.
- Take breaks to sit as needed. Practice deep, controlled breathing.
- When walking up stairs, stop often to rest. Breathe in as you rest. Breathe out through pursed lips as you take a step up.
Do tasks sitting down
- Set up a comfortable work area where you can reach everything you need.
- Sit in a comfortable chair with good back support.

Keep things in easy reach
- Keep things you use often in a convenient place.
- Keep heavier items like toaster ovens and heavy dishes at waist height to avoid extra lifting.
- Put chairs or stools around your home so you can sit while working or take breaks when walking.
- If you can, set up your bedroom and bathroom on the ground floor of your home.

Cooking and cleaning
- Sit instead of stand when you are cooking meals, washing dishes, folding laundry and other chores.
- Space out cleaning—don’t do all the rooms in one day.
- Don’t use harsh chemicals and spray cleaners.
- Use long-handled tools like reachers so you don’t have to bend or reach.
- Cook meals in batches and freeze leftovers so that you can cook less often.
- Use the dishwasher or let items dry in a drying rack.

tips

1. Focus on your breathing.
2. When you are active, take deep, controlled breaths.
3. Fill your lungs fully—take belly breaths.
4. Don’t forget to exhale—breathe out to remove the waste air from your lungs.
Showering and bathing

- Use a shower seat to rest while bathing.
- Sit when washing your face, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, and getting dressed.
- Use a long-handled brush to wash your back, legs and feet.
- Use your oxygen while bathing. Hang the tubing over the shower door or curtain.
- Wrap in a terry cloth robe instead of toweling off. It will absorb much of the water.

Getting dressed

- Store the clothes you wear most often at waist level.
- Lay out your clothes the night before.
- Wear clothes that button, zip or fasten in the front. It will make getting dressed easier and will use less energy.
- Dress your lower body first.
- Use a sock aide and long-handled shoe horn so you don’t have to bend to your feet.
- Use elastic shoelaces so you can slip into your shoes or sneakers.

Lifting and carrying heavy objects

- Use a rolling cart to push heavy things instead of carrying them.
- If you need to carry heavy things, make more trips.
- Put fewer items in each grocery bag and less laundry in each basket.
- Carry things close to your body.

Tips for shopping

- Call ahead before going shopping to make sure stores will have the items you need.
- Write your grocery list in the order you’ll find things in the store.
- If you don’t know where things are located, ask for a map or for help. Ask the bagger to bag refrigerator items together.
- Let store employees help carry things or bring the bags to your car.
- Bring a family member or friend. Let them carry your bags into the house.
- When you get home, bring in the refrigerator bags first. Leave the other bags until after you have rested.

Let your family and friends help. They might not know what you need if you don’t tell them. It is okay to ask others for help.
Managing a chronic illness like COPD can be stressful. As your lung disease gets worse, at times you may feel more short of breath and may not be able to do all the things you normally do. This can cause you to be anxious and frustrated.

Ways to manage your stress and anxiety:

- yoga
- meditation
- prayer
- listening to music
- relaxation exercises
- guided imagery
- going to counseling or joining a support group for people with COPD
- physical activity

Relaxation Activity

Sit in a comfortable chair with your back supported. Keep your feet flat on the floor and rest your hands on your thighs. Close your eyes.

1. Take slow, deep breaths in through your nose.
2. Breathe out slowly through pursed lips.
3. Sit quietly, listening only to your breathing.
4. Tense your toes, and then relax them.
5. Tense your thighs, and then relax them.
6. Tense your arms and hands, and then relax them.
7. Shrug your shoulders, and then relax them.
8. Tighten the muscles in your face, and then relax them.
9. Take four more slow, deep breaths, and then open your eyes.
10. Take slow, and deep breaths in through your nose and breathe out through pursed lips for a few minutes before standing up.
Maintaining Intimacy

Living with COPD not only is difficult for you but can cause concern and sadness for the people that love you. Your partner may be worried that sex will be too tiring for you. Talking about your feelings and fears with your partner will help decrease those concerns. Being intimate may be holding hands, touching, hugging or sexual activity. Enjoying the warmth and closeness of your relationship is most important.

Shortness of breath and medicines can affect your sexual ability. Talk with your doctor or nurse if this happens. They may be able to change your medicine to lessen this side effect.

Tips to improve sex for you and your partner:

- Use a quick-relief (rescue) inhaler 15 minutes before you begin.
- Consider sexual activity in the morning, when you are most rested.
- Wait 2-3 hours after a meal.
- Use pursed-lip breathing to control your breathing.
- Use your oxygen, if prescribed.
- Don’t rush; take your time.
- Choose a position that is the most comfortable for your breathing.
- Keep the room cool and comfortable.

You are still the same loving person you were before being diagnosed with COPD. Don’t be afraid to share intimacy with your partner. Talk to your doctor or nurse about any concerns you have about sex.
Staying Healthy

Section 7

Exercise

Having COPD can make it hard to breathe. Even though you may feel the need to slow down or do less, staying active will make you stronger. Regular exercise is a very important part of managing COPD.

How exercise helps COPD

You may be afraid that exercising will make you short of breath. Everyone gets short of breath with exercise. When you are not active, your muscles lose strength and it becomes harder to do physical activities.

Exercise can help:

- strengthen your muscles
- improve your flexibility
- reduce shortness of breath
- improve your balance
- you be active for a longer time

Exercising may be hard to do at first, but it will get easier as you get stronger. Learning to control your breathing and improving your strength help reduce feelings of shortness of breath.

Types of exercise

There are many types of exercise that help strengthen your muscles. Choosing something you enjoy will make doing that activity easier and more fun. You do not need to go to a gym or buy equipment to exercise. You can include exercise as part of your daily activities.

Exercise includes:

- walking
- cycling or bike riding
- swimming
- yoga
- weight lifting
How to exercise with COPD

Using pursed-lip breathing will help you control your shortness of breath. At first, you may only be able to do a few minutes of exercise at a time. Slowly increase the amount of time you exercise every week.

Start slowly

- Warm up your muscles by walking for 5 minutes at the start of every exercise.
- If your doctor or nurse has prescribed a quick-relief inhaler, use it 15 minutes before you exercise.
- Use your oxygen if prescribed by your doctor or nurse.
- Keep track of the type of exercise and how long you exercise each day.

- Wait an hour or so after eating to do any exercise or activity.
- Pace yourself.
- Exhale slowly as you push, pull or lift something.
- Do not hold your breath while exercising.
- On days you have less energy, break exercise into shorter periods. For example, you can do two 15-minute periods rather than 30 minutes.

To help you stick with it

- Make exercise part of your day—take the stairs or park farther away so you have to walk.
- Exercise when you have the most energy.
- Exercise with a friend or a group.
- Try new things so you don't get bored.

When to stop exercise:

- if you have chronic pain and it gets worse
- if you feel dizzy, have chest heaviness or feel very short of breath

Always cool down and stretch after exercise. Stretching allows your heart rate to come down, improves your flexibility and helps prevent sore muscles. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are exercises you should not do.
Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Pulmonary rehabilitation is a program led by specially trained medical staff that helps people with COPD learn to manage their lung disease. Through exercise, education, and the support of others, you will learn how to live well with COPD. Pulmonary rehabilitation is a great way to start an exercise program.

Pulmonary rehabilitation includes:

- exercise to improve your overall physical fitness
- breathing exercises to reduce shortness of breath
- energy-saving tips to improve your ability to do daily tasks
- education about your lung disease and how to best manage your symptoms
- tips to control stress and anxiety
- help to quit smoking
- support from staff and other people living with COPD

Pulmonary rehabilitation can help:

- improve your quality of life
- improve your ability to care for yourself
- allow you to go back to work or to do the things you like
- reduce hospital stays
- manage your COPD symptoms

Ask your doctor, nurse or respiratory therapist about a pulmonary rehabilitation program in your area. Learning about your lung disease and how to manage your symptoms will help you live a healthier life with COPD.
Glossary

Advance directives (sometimes called living wills): forms that you fill out once you decide what is important to you if you should get into a health crisis

Air trapping: when it is difficult to exhale completely

Allergic rhinitis: runny nose caused by allergies

Alpha-1 antitrypsin deficiency: a genetic disease that can cause COPD

Alveoli: air sacs

Arteries: blood vessels that carry oxygenated blood away from the heart to the body’s cells, tissues and organs

Arterial blood gas (ABG): a blood test from an artery that measures how well your lungs are able to move oxygen into your blood and remove carbon dioxide from your blood

Asbestos: mineral that can be woven into fabrics and is used in fire-resistant and insulating materials such as brake linings

Bone density test: x-ray that measures bone loss

Bronchial tubes: air passages or airways

Bronchodilators: medicines that make you breathe better by relaxing the muscles in your air passages and keep them from squeezing

Carbon dioxide: waste air

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation: emergency lifesaving procedure that is done when someone’s heart has stopped

Cataracts: clouding of the lens in your eye

Comorbidities: other chronic diseases a person has that make treating chronic disease more difficult

Continuous flow oxygen: oxygen that runs constantly through a tube into your nose and throat

Continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP): a device prescribed by a doctor or nurse to treat OSA

COPD Action Plan: a guide to help you recognize the early signs of a flare-up and what you should do when a flare-up occurs

Coronary arteries: blood vessels that supply oxygen-rich blood to your heart muscle

Coronary artery disease: a disease in which a waxy substance called plaque builds up inside your coronary arteries

Cor pulmonale: a condition that causes the right side of the heart to fail

CT scan: a picture of the inside of a part of your body

Diabetes: a condition in which your body does not make enough insulin or does not use insulin correctly

Diaphragm: a large muscle that sits below your lungs and does most of the work of breathing

Dose: amount of medicine

Echocardiogram: an ultrasound of the heart

Electrocardiogram: a test that checks for problems with the electrical activity of your heart

Energy conservation: saving energy

Esophagus: passage that connects the mouth and the stomach

Exacerbation: flare-up of your symptoms

Expectorant: medicine that loosens mucus so it’s easier to cough up

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD): acid reflux

Glaucoma: a condition of increased pressure within your eyeball, causing gradual loss of sight

Healthcare agent: the person you want to speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself

Heart failure: a condition in which your heart can’t pump enough blood to meet your body’s needs

Hospice: care for people closer to the end of life who want their treatment focused on comfort

Hypertension: high blood pressure

Inflammatory: swelling

Inhaler: device that contains medicine as a mist or powder
**Insulin:** hormone that carries sugar into your cells so that it can be used for energy

**Intravenous:** in a vein

**Long-acting (controller) medicines:** medicines taken once or twice a day that prevent shortness of breath

**Lung transplantation:** surgically replacing one or both of your lungs

**Lung volume reduction surgery:** surgically removing diseased parts of one or both of your lungs

**Mucolytics:** medicines that break up mucus

**Nebulizer:** device that turns liquid medicine into mist

**Nicotine replacement:** medicines that replace the nicotine you do not get when you quit smoking

**Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA):** a condition that causes you to have periods when you stop breathing during sleep

**Osteoarthritis:** mechanical wear and tear on joints

**Osteoporosis:** illness that makes your bones brittle and fragile

**Oxygenated:** combined or mixed with oxygen

**Palliative care:** care provided at any stage of an illness focused on preventing suffering, managing symptoms and coordinating communication between the many caregivers

**Peripheral vascular/arterial disease:** a condition of the blood vessels that supply the legs and feet. It leads to narrowing and hardening of the arteries. This causes decreased blood flow, which can injure nerves and other tissues.

**Pneumonia:** lung infection

**Pollutants:** waste materials that are harmful to air, soil or water

**Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST):** a medical order stating a patient’s wishes regarding treatments that are commonly used in a medical crisis

**Pulmonary hypertension:** high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs

**Pulse dose oxygen:** oxygen that flows when you breathe in through your nose and stops when you breathe out

**Pulse oximeter:** a machine that measures the oxygen in your blood with a clip that goes on your finger, toe or earlobe

**Quick-relief (rescue) medicine:** medicine that starts to work in a few minutes and lasts a few hours

**Reflux:** when stomach acid backs up and irritates the esophagus

**Rheumatoid arthritis:** when your immune system mistakenly attacks the lining of your joints, causing a painful swelling that can eventually result in joint deformity

**Secondhand smoke:** smoke from a burning cigarette, cigar, pipe or hookah

**Silica:** a very common mineral found in many materials common on construction sites, including soil, sand, concrete, masonry, rock, granite and landscaping materials. The dust created by cutting, grinding or drilling can cause lung disease and cancer.

**Sinusitis:** swelling of the air cavities within the passages of the nose. Sinusitis can be caused by infection, but also can be caused by allergies and irritation of the sinuses.

**Spirometry:** a test to see how well your lungs are working

**Sputum:** mucus in your lungs

**Stroke:** when blood flow to an area of your brain is cut off

**Suppressant:** medicine to help you cough less

**Thirdhand smoke:** tobacco particles that stay on surfaces long after burning tobacco has been put out

**Thrush:** infection of the mouth and throat

**Trachea:** windpipe

**Ultrasound:** a test that uses sound waves to see inside your body

**Vaping devices:** electronic cigarettes, cigars and pipes that produce steam vapor when smoked