

COPD Emergency Checklist & Action Plan

COPD Emergency Checklist

Call 911 or Seek Emergency Care If You Experience:

- Severe shortness of breath unrelieved by medication
- Chest pain or tightness
- Bluish lips or fingernails (cyanosis)
- Confusion, dizziness, or trouble staying awake
- Rapid heartbeat or new irregular heartbeat
- High fever with chills and increased mucus
- No relief after using rescue inhaler or nebulizer

Emergency Supplies to Keep on Hand

- Rescue inhaler (e.g., Albuterol)
- Nebulizer and extra tubing/masks
- Oxygen tank and backup supply
- List of medications and dosages
- Contact numbers (doctor, pharmacy, emergency contacts)
- Copy of your COPD action plan
- Pulse oximeter
- Thermometer
- Copies of insurance cards and medical records

Green Zone: Daily Management

Symptoms:

- Breathing is normal for you
- No cough or mild occasional cough
- Clear mucus
- Normal activity levels

Actions:

- Take maintenance medications as prescribed

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- Avoid smoke and air pollution
- Stay hydrated and eat healthy
- Use oxygen if prescribed
- Exercise as advised by your doctor
- Get flu and pneumonia vaccines

Yellow Zone: Flare-Up Warning

Symptoms:

- Increased shortness of breath
- More coughing or wheezing
- Thicker, yellow/green/bloody mucus
- Tiredness or reduced activity

Actions:

- Use quick-relief (rescue) inhaler every 4-6 hours as directed
- Start antibiotics or steroids if prescribed for flare-ups
- Monitor symptoms and oxygen levels
- Contact your healthcare provider

Red Zone: Emergency Symptoms

Symptoms:

- Severe difficulty breathing
- Cannot speak full sentences
- Lips/fingernails turning blue
- Disorientation or sleepiness
- No relief from medications

Actions:

- Call 911 or go to the emergency room
- Use oxygen and rescue inhaler as instructed

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- Bring your medication list and this plan with you