

Caring for health

Resources for friends and family



Fall 2016
Courtesy of Humana



Breathe easier!

Caring for COPD

If you or someone you care for has chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), you already know that living with this condition can be a challenge. November is COPD Awareness Month, and we want to help you understand how to better manage COPD and its symptoms — so you and your loved one can live your best, healthiest life.

What is COPD?

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease is a lung disease that results in restricted airflow, making it hard to breathe. This condition keeps the lungs from doing their job of bringing oxygen into the body and getting rid of waste gases. It can get worse over time.¹

While an estimated 15 million Americans suffer from COPD — the third leading cause of death in the United States — several additional millions likely have COPD and don't even know it. With early diagnosis and treatment, people with COPD can improve their quality of life.²

What causes COPD?

Cigarette smoke is, by far, the most common cause of COPD. Other causes are long-term exposure to lung irritants like second-hand smoke, air pollution and chemical fumes.³

Most people who have COPD are at least 40 years old when symptoms begin, although people younger than 40 can have COPD due to certain genetic conditions.

COPD symptoms

Symptoms of COPD grow slowly over the years. Watch for:

- Frequent or long-lasting coughs (with or without mucus)
- Shortness of breath (worse with activity)
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness

If you or someone you love has these symptoms, see a doctor.

Keep COPD under control

COPD can't be cured, but it can be managed. Lots of things can be done to treat symptoms and improve quality of life — so COPD doesn't keep you or your loved one from enjoying your favorite activities.

¹ www.cdc.gov/copd/

² www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/copd/event-listing/awareness-month/

³ www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/copd/causes



Your time

She kicked the habit for love

The power of love helped Humana member Nancy C., of Bell, Florida, kick her 50-year, pack-a-day smoking habit in 2010. “My husband, Clarence Ray, has COPD and a collapsed lung, and doctors told me he needed to breathe clean, fresh air at home. So I quit smoking with the help of nicotine patches and gum. I wasn't ready to lose my husband.”

The couple then added healthy new habits. “I keep a tray of vegetables and low-fat dips in the refrigerator for snacking and lunches,” she said. “I exercise regularly now — I love dance-fitness classes — and Clarence Ray walks twice a day. We feel better than we have in years!”



Continued –



Five ways to love your lungs

- If you smoke, quit – and make your home a smoke-free zone
- Get a flu shot every year
- Make sure your pneumonia vaccine is up to date
- Wash your hands often (or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) to get rid of germs
- Take medicines exactly as directed by your doctor

Call your doctor if:

- You have symptoms of a breathing problem
- A breathing problem you already have gets worse
- Your medicines aren't working as they should

As always, follow a healthy diet and exercise.

To find out more about COPD — including how to “listen” to your lungs and talk with your doctor about your condition — download the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute's **COPD Outreach Toolkit**.*

*www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/copd/event-listing/awareness-month/materials-resources.htm

Ways to help manage COPD include:

Stop smoking — It doesn't matter how long you or your loved one has smoked or your age — it's never too late to quit.

Take medicines as directed by your doctor — Bronchodilators are usually taken by inhaler and make breathing easier by relaxing muscles in airways; inhaled steroids help reduce inflammation during COPD “flare-ups”; as COPD progresses, the oxygen level in the blood may drop and oxygen therapy may be needed to make sure there is enough in the blood to keep muscles and tissues working their best.

Ask your doctor about medications and lung exercises that can also help you or your loved one suffering with COPD.

How pulmonary rehab can help

Pulmonary rehabilitation, available in the outpatient setting, can help manage COPD-related symptoms. It combines education, exercise and support to help you or your loved one suffering from COPD lead a more active life, reduce “flare-ups,” improve quality of life and stay out of the doctor's office or hospital.

Pulmonary rehab does not reverse the damage to lungs from COPD but helps you or your loved one perform daily tasks, such as walking, dressing and other chores more easily. A team of health professionals works to determine a treatment plan that fits in with your or your loved one's short- and long-term goals.

Pulmonary rehab sessions offer:

- Education about flare-up triggers, early signs of infection, when to seek treatment and disease progression
- Information on treatment options, including inhalers and oxygen therapy
- Breathing techniques to help with daily symptoms
- A professional partner to help you exercise
- Tips on healthy choices like eating well and help to quit smoking

Although pulmonary rehab can improve your or your loved one's daily life, it does not reverse effects that COPD has had on the lungs or other organs. While it does not cure COPD, over time, it does help you or your loved one train the mind, muscles and heart to get the most out of damaged lungs.

To find out if you or your loved one might benefit from pulmonary rehab, take the assessment at Humana.com and talk to your doctor.

Harmonica — a great lung workout!

There are classes on how to play the harmonica, which mimics lung exercises. Ask your doctor if he or she knows of any local classes like these, which could make improving lung function more fun!



Don't let the flu find you!

It's up to you to look after your health and the health of your loved one you're caring for. And that means doing everything you can to stay flu-free.

Improve your chances of staying healthy through the coming fall and winter months by following these two easy steps:



STEP 1: Ask your doctor if you or your loved one need any of the following shots: flu, pneumonia, shingles or whooping cough.



STEP 2: Pick a time and get the shots you need.

"We know if you plan ahead, you're more likely to follow through and get these shots," said Andrew Renda, M.D., MPH, director of Humana's Bold Goal Measurement. "These are simple steps to take — for your own health and to keep your loved ones healthier, too."

Your best shot to stay healthy

For flu shots this year, you may be able to choose between the traditional shot or a high-dose version. Both are safe, effective options to help prevent common and seasonal illness.

"The bottom line is, we at Humana want every senior to get a flu shot — any flu shot — because that's one of the best ways to protect against illness," Dr. Renda said. Ask your doctor which type of flu shot is best for you.

Vaccines (shots) are important for almost everyone, but especially as we get older: "As we age, the immune system just doesn't work as well as it did when we were younger," Dr. Renda said. "That means we're more likely to get things like flu and pneumonia, unless we get the shots."

Health problems may mean higher risk

Flu is never fun for anyone, but healthy people can usually fight it off more easily than those with health problems or the elderly. If you or your loved one has diabetes, heart disease, COPD or other conditions, getting shots can keep you out of the doctor's office and even out of the hospital this winter.

"You're probably already doing most of the right things to stay healthy, like taking medicines to keep any health conditions under control," Dr. Renda said. "Getting shots is just one more step you can take so you can have a great winter spending time with friends and family."

For most members, your health plan pays for these shots, so you can get them at no extra cost to you. Make your appointment, talk to your doctor and roll up your sleeve for better health!



Test your flu IQ

You do everything you can to help your loved one stay healthy. That means taking care of yourself, too. Start by knowing flu facts — and be a flu fighter!

Flu is a highly contagious virus. Even healthy adults can get flu and spread it to others who may be at risk for serious complications and may not be able to recover. The single most important thing you can do to protect yourself and your family during flu season is get a flu shot.

Test your flu IQ

at www.cdc.gov/flu/fluqi.htm



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– Dr. Andrew Renda



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Humana is proud to be an affiliated member of the NATIONAL ALLIANCE *for* CAREGIVING (NAC). The NAC is a non-profit coalition of national organizations focusing on advancing and supporting family caregiving. We hold a shared belief with the NAC that improving the lives of friend and family caregivers is a priority and wholly achievable through research, innovation and advocacy.

You're our hero!

This month, we salute you, our caregiver heroes. During National Caregiver's Month, we want to thank you for giving your all to those you care for — and provide tips to help you take care of yourself, too.

Caregiving can be a tough and often thankless job. Family caregivers provide an average of 20 hours of care per week, with most caring for an aging loved one.* While you spend much of your time caring for another, make sure you get the things you need, such as:

- Help — Don't be afraid to ask for it. The more family members who pitch in, the better.
- Understanding — Talking to someone who understands can help ease your stress. Caregivers who are Humana members have access to Humana's **Member Assistance Program** (MAP). MAP can help you care for yourself and others by connecting you with local services like support groups or transportation. Members can call **1-800-767-6171 (TTY: 711)**, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with after hours calls returned the next business day.
- Rest — Take a day off and give your body and mind a chance to recharge. Check out options for adult day care. The National Adult Day Services Association (www.nadsa.org) has a ZIP code-based adult day center locator to help you find a center that can care for your loved one while you take care of you.

Find more caregiving tips at: www.aplaceformom.com/blog/facts-every-caregiver-needs-to-know/

Caregiving can be tough — but it's rewarding, too! You're making a difference in someone's life, every day.

*According to the
National Alliance for Caregiving
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Humana is a Medicare Advantage HMO, PPO and PFFS organization and a stand-alone prescription drug plan with a Medicare contract. Enrollment in any Humana plan depends on contract renewal.