

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

Patient Information



How you want to be treated.

North Shore, Sea to Sky,
Sunshine Coast, Powell River,
Richmond and Vancouver

Welcome to Our Hospital

Our hospital staff and doctors are dedicated to giving you the best possible care. This booklet provides a general outline of what you can expect during your hospital stay. It is designed so that you and your family can become more involved in your care and discharge.

C.O.P.D.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema. It sometimes also includes asthma. Common symptoms are shortness of breath, sputum production and intermittent worsening of symptoms. This is a lifelong condition that is usually caused by smoking but other factors such as workplace exposure, pollution, and multiple lung infections may contribute to lung damage.

We Do Care

We want your hospital visit to be as comfortable as possible. Feel free to ask questions and tell us your concerns.

We want you to be a partner in your care.

During Your Admission Stay

In the first few days of your hospital stay, you can expect the following:

Tests and Treatments

- A nurse will measure your blood pressure, temperature, pulse, and respiration rate every few hours.
- You will have blood tests and a chest x-ray.
- We will measure the oxygen level in your blood with a small probe attached to your finger. We will explain what it means.
- You may need oxygen by mask or through your nose by nasal prongs. We will adjust it according to your test results.

- We may ask you for a sample of your sputum.
- You may need an intravenous (IV) line started.
- A respiratory therapist will assess your oxygen requirements.

Diet

- You may have your regular diet or the doctor may order a special diet for you. We will check to see how well you are eating and drinking.
- If you have recently lost weight or are not eating well, it is important to speak with a dietitian.
- If you have any concerns regarding your food, please ask your nurse.

Activity

- We encourage you to be up and about as much as you are able.
- Staff will monitor your ability to walk. If necessary, a physiotherapist and occupational therapist will review your mobility and other equipment needs.
- We will assess to see if you need oxygen while you are walking.
- You will be encouraged to do as much of your care as possible.

Medication

- You will be receiving medication to open your air passages and to help you breathe.
- When you are ready we will teach you how to use your puffers.
- Steroids may be given (by mouth or IV) to reduce inflammation in your air passages.
- You may be on antibiotics (IV or by mouth).
- As you improve, your medication will be given by mouth.

- We will ask you if you have any difficulty breathing.
- Please tell your nurse if you have difficulty sleeping at night.
- You may receive medications to prevent constipation.

Vancouver Coastal Health and Providence Health Care are a tobacco free area. If you smoke, we will offer you nicotine replacement therapy to ease any withdrawal symptoms you may have. If you want to quit we will support you and give you information on groups and programs you may find helpful.

Discharge Planning and Learning

- Members of the health care team will be available to assist you with breathing exercises, positioning to help you breathe easier and discharge plans.

Preparing for Discharge

(1-2 days before discharge)

Tests and Treatments

- A nurse will measure your blood pressure, temperature, pulse and respiration rate at least once a day.
- We will continue to monitor the oxygen level in your blood.
- If your tests show you require home oxygen, staff will assist with the arrangements.

Diet

- Ask your nurse if you have any questions about your diet.
- If you have any concerns about your ability to manage meal preparation at home, ask to speak to a social worker and/or occupational therapist.

Activity

- We encourage you to continue to be up and about as much as possible.

- If necessary, a physiotherapist will assess you for equipment to help you walk.
- You may still require oxygen while walking.
- An occupational therapist is available to review other equipment you may need in your daily activities.

Discharge Planning

- If you have any questions about the medications you will be taking at home, please ask.
- Medications to help you breathe will be continued.
- We will discuss how you plan to manage at home.
- We will talk to you about ways to help you conserve energy.
- We will teach you how to use puffers.
- Your doctor may refer you to an outpatient respiratory clinic or for a breathing test after you go home.
- Your doctor may ask you to phone his/her office to make a follow-up appointment.
- You will be given a plan to follow after you leave the hospital.

Questions

- If you have any questions please ask your nurse.

Patient Information for at Home

Medications

- Make sure you buy all your prescriptions at the pharmacy and take them as directed.
- You should check your inhalers every so often to make sure they are not empty or expired.
- You should have spare puffers - never run out!
- Learn how to use inhalers properly to get the full dose of medications - this is an important step.

Diet

- You require more calories to give you energy to breathe.
- If you do not eat well, you may be tired, weak and unable to do your usual activities.
- If your appetite is poor, try eating smaller meals more frequently, including nutritional snacks.
- If you need further information call HealthLinkBC at 8-1-1 and ask to speak to a registered dietitian, or ask your family physician for a referral to the hospital outpatient dietitian.

Treatment

- Stop smoking to prevent further lung damage. Call QuitNow at anytime: 1-877-455-2233 or visit www.quitnow.ca
- Avoid irritants like dust and smoky atmospheres, because they can further lead to narrowing of bronchial tubes.
- If you have phlegm, cough it up. If it remains in your lungs it can clog bronchial tubes and make breathing more difficult.
- If you need further reading material call BC Lung Association (604-731-5864), or visit www.bc.lung.ca.
- Learn how to use your oxygen equipment properly and safely. Your Home Oxygen Provider can help you with this

Activity

- Conserve energy by planning your activities.
Rest between tasks and practice breathing control.
- You should practice your breathing exercises at rest so that you are comfortable using them when doing activity.
- An appropriate amount of exercise is important to keep your body fit and at maximum efficiency.
- Basic rules of energy conservation include:
 - Take rest breaks
 - Delegate
 - Prioritize
 - Schedule your day and week
 - Sit to do things
 - Pace yourself
 - Simplify tasks

Exercise

- Exercise is good for you. Exercise over the long term will help reduce shortness of breath during activities.
- When you are not active your muscles become weak and weak muscles use more oxygen.
- Exercise strengthens your muscles so they need less oxygen and you will not become short of breath as quickly.
- Exercise improves your appetite, helps you sleep better and helps reduce stress.
- Choose activities that you enjoy (for example, walking, stationary cycling, swimming, golfing without using a cart).
- Check with your physician before starting an exercise program, or **ask to be referred to a Pulmonary Rehab Program.**
- Exercise is a very important part of your treatment.
- If you always feel short of breath when doing activity try taking your blue inhaler (salbutamol) about 15-30 minutes before that activity

Medical Advice

- It is important to call your family physician if:
 - You are more short of breath than usual.
 - You are using your puffers more often and they are not helping.
 - You are coughing more or producing more sputum.
 - You feel confused, dizzy or fatigued.
- Stress and excitement may make breathing more difficult. Ask your health professional about relaxation techniques and learn how to use them.
- Talk to your doctor about making an action plan for flare-ups in the future. Get this plan in writing to refer to when you are home.
- Make an appointment to see your family doctor within 1 week of leaving the hospital to review your medications and get an action plan for the future.

There are many outpatient programs available in the lower mainland for individuals with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

These programs are designed to assist individuals with lung disease manage their condition and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

For further information call:

Lions Gate Hospital BREATH Program 604-984-5752

Vancouver General Hospital
Champion Lung Fitness Program 604-875-4830

St Paul's Hospital Pulmonary Rehab 604-806-8115

Kerrisdale Community Centre Healthy Lungs,
Healthy Lives 604-267-4430

Ask your family doctor about other programs near you.

For more copies, go online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca> or email pchem@vch.ca and quote Catalogue No. **FN.510.C57**

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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.

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