COPD Office Visit Checklist

Answer the questions below before your next visit and be sure to talk with your doctor about your answers.

Date: ________________

Since your last office visit:

1. Has your breathing been worse than usual? □ Yes □ No
2. Have you coughed more than usual? □ Yes □ No
3. Have you coughed up more mucus than usual? □ Yes □ No
4. Has your mucus been thicker than usual? □ Yes □ No
5. Has your mucus been a different color than usual? □ Yes □ No
6. Have you been wheezing? □ Yes □ No
7. Have you been awakened by your breathing? □ Yes □ No
8. About how many hours have you been sleeping each night? __________________________
9. How would you describe your appetite? □ Decreased □ Normal □ Increased
10. Have you lost weight? □ Yes □ No   If yes, how much? ________
11. What activities have you been doing?_______________________________________________
12. Is there any activity that is harder to do because of your breathing? □ Yes □ No  

13. Overall, is your health better, the same, or worse? ________________________________

Also:

○ Did you use your breathing medicine today? □ Yes □ No

Bring all your medicines to your doctor’s appointment. Talk to your doctor about how you are feeling and how you can better manage your COPD.
Preventing COPD Flare-ups

A flare-up is when your symptoms get worse. Your doctor may use the term “exacerbation” to describe a flare-up. Flare-ups may be caused by:

- Smoking or smoke coming from other people who smoke
- Airway infections
- Pollutants (like dust or chemicals)

Get treatment right away if you have a flare-up.

Protect yourself from airway infections

- Ask your doctor if you need vaccines (shots) to help prevent flu or pneumonia.
- Stay away from friends or co-workers who have colds or the flu.

Education can help prevent flare-ups

The goal is to help you better manage your COPD. This is done by:

- Learning about your disease
- Learning how to breathe properly
- Taking medicines as directed
- Using equipment correctly (if you use any equipment to help with your breathing)
- Learning which exercises will help you feel better

Be aware of your breathing

- Watch for symptoms like more shortness of breath, wheezing, or coughing than usual. Look for a change in the color of your mucus.
- Tell your doctor if new symptoms appear.
- Ask your doctor how you can prevent a flare-up.
- Ask your doctor what to do if you have a flare-up.
- If your symptoms change, seek treatment quickly.

Taking care of yourself can help prevent COPD flare-ups.
Treating COPD

There are a number of treatments that may help you feel better. Talk to your doctor about what treatment is right for you. **If you are still smoking, the most important thing you can do is quit.**

**Long-term controller medicines**
- Most are inhaled medicines that you take every day to help manage your COPD.
- It is important to use your controller medicines every day, even if you are feeling fine.

**Quick-relief (rescue) medicines**
- Most are inhaled medicines you use when your breathing suddenly gets worse.
- Your doctor will tell you when and how to use a rescue medicine.

**Exercise and diet**
- Exercising and eating the right foods may help increase your strength to do everyday activities.
- Your doctor or respiratory healthcare professional can show you the right exercises and how to do them safely.
- Ask them to review your diet and create a menu that’s right for you.

**Patients with more severe COPD may benefit from breath training and oxygen.**

**Breath training**
- Breath training may help you breathe easier and be less anxious about your breathing.
- Your doctor or respiratory healthcare professional can give you tips on breathing when you are short of breath.

**Oxygen**
- If your oxygen level is low, wearing oxygen will help you live longer and feel better. Your doctor can do a simple test to determine if oxygen can help you.

Follow your treatment plan exactly as prescribed by your doctor.