

TAKING CHARGE

of your COPD
FALL/WINTER 2018



Medication and monitoring

Want to keep your health on track? Put a plan in writing

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a long-term disease that causes breathlessness, coughing and wheezing. This is because the airways become narrow, making it difficult to move air in and out.

There's no cure for COPD, but it can be treated. Part of that treatment will be knowing what you can do to help manage the condition. You can do things to help with your symptoms, keep them from becoming worse and prevent complications. One thing you can do to help manage COPD is to make a personal COPD action plan. You and your doctor should make this plan together. It should include information on:

- What to do on a daily basis to manage it
- How to know if your symptoms are getting worse, and what to do
- When to call the doctor or whether you need emergency care

Your plan may include a section that lists information about you. This could include your doctor's phone number; the medications you take, how much to take and when to take them; and other important information about you and your condition.

Another part of your action plan will be divided into three "zones:" green, yellow and red. On days that you're in the **green zone**, you will:

- Be feeling generally well
- Be sleeping well
- Be able to do your normal activities and exercise
- Have a good appetite

On "**green**" days, you will take these actions:

- Take your medications as directed
- Use oxygen if prescribed
- Avoid anything that makes your symptoms worse, such as cigarette smoke
- Follow your normal diet and exercise plan

If you're having a "**yellow**" zone day, you might:

- Not feel well: have less energy, poor appetite, poor sleep or feel like you have a chest cold
- Need your quick-relief medications more often and/or feel your medications aren't working
- Feel more breathless
- Cough more
- Have more mucus or phlegm

When you're in the **yellow zone**, actions you should take include:

- Take your medications as directed
- Use "pursed lip" breathing
- Use your quick-relief medicines as prescribed
- Avoid triggers like cigarette smoke and other irritants at all times
- Start other medicines as prescribed
- Call your doctor right away if your symptoms don't get better
- Get extra rest

The **red zone** is serious. If you're having the following symptoms, you need medical care right away:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Fever or chills
- Can't really do anything because of your breathlessness
- Chest pain
- Can't sleep because of your breathing
- Coughing up blood

Your actions if you're in the **red zone**? **Call 911 or seek immediate medical care.** Your doctor may give you further instructions about what to do while waiting for help.



Talk about your COPD action plan every time you see the doctor. You may need to make changes from time to time. Following your plan will help you feel empowered to manage your disease.

Diet and exercise

Tai Chi: A gentle way to move, meditate and de-stress

Learn more about this "moving meditation"



Tai chi is a mind-body exercise that was first used by Chinese monks to improve concentration and physical well-being. Today, some people may turn to it to help manage stress.

Sometimes called "moving meditation," tai chi's graceful and precise body movements can enhance balance, strength and coordination while helping you achieve better body awareness. Tai chi's movements are said to align the body, improve flexibility and increase energy flow called qi. It may also increase inner peace.

Combining breathing exercises with slow, gentle movements, tai chi is an activity for all age groups and all levels of fitness. It is ideal for just about anyone—children, adults of all ages or people with disabilities. Many of the movements can be adapted and performed in a sitting position.

Benefits of tai chi

Researchers have studied the benefits of tai chi. They may include:

- Increased bone health
- Improved balance and fall prevention
- Cardiopulmonary fitness
- Improved strength, movement and flexibility
- Increased quality of life
- Improved self-confidence

Another advantage of tai chi is that injuries from this activity are few. The movements are performed very slowly and are not strenuous if done correctly. Like any activity, your muscles may be sore when you first start tai chi. You may need to change or stay away from some of the movements if you are pregnant or have certain health conditions. Contact your doctor to discuss whether you should take a tai chi class.

If you are physically inactive or have a chronic health condition such as arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, pregnancy or other symptoms, check with your doctor before starting an exercise program. He or she can tell you what types of activities are safe and suitable for you.



Healthy coping

Stress management: Understanding your triggers is the first step

Can you identify some internal pressures and some outside factors that can cause you to feel stressed?

For most people, stress is a part of life. We feel it, complain about it and think about how we can get rid of it. But do we really understand what stress is and what we should do about it?

What is stress?

Simply put, stress is a physical response to a feeling, situation or event that interferes with your sense of well-being. The factors or emotions that cause you to feel anxious, tense or afraid are called stressors. Perception of stress is based on individual response. What may be stressful for one may be thrilling and challenging for another.

Internal vs. external stress

Some stressors are internal—stress-inducing thoughts or behaviors. These thoughts come from one's psychological mindset or expectations. Examples include putting pressure on yourself to be perfect or fear of public speaking. In more serious cases, internal stressors may lead to feelings of depression and anxiety.

Other stressors come from external factors, which are forces that you can't easily control. Examples include major life events, discovering your pay has been cut, urgent deadlines or an upcoming exam.

Internal and external stressors can have the same physical and psychological effects. You may have trouble sleeping, lose your appetite or lose interest in daily activities. You may be irritable, have headaches or stomach pains, or find that you cry easily.

Over time, chronic stress can be even more damaging. As your body stays in a state of alert, your immune system may be weakened. You could be more at risk for heart attack and stroke. Chronic stress may upset your reproductive and digestive systems.

As you can see, it's important to figure out the sources of your stress so you can start working toward a more healthy and relaxed mental state. It is helpful to learn coping skills to deal with stress—as stress is part of life.

Some examples of internal stressors

According to mental health experts at HelpGuide.org, here are some common internal stressors:

- Inability to accept uncertainty
- Pessimism
- Negative self-talk
- Unrealistic expectations
- Rigid thinking, lack of flexibility
- All-or-nothing attitude
- Needing to always be perfect

Some examples of external stressors

Here are some examples of external stressors, HelpGuide.org says:

- Major life changes, such as death of a loved one, divorce, military deployment, career that requires one to be away from home frequently
- Work or school
- Relationship difficulties
- Financial worries
- Being too busy
- Children and family

Left untreated, everyday stresses can lead to chronic stress. If you feel depressed or hopeless, seek help from your doctor or a mental health professional right away. The earlier you seek treatment, the greater the chances of successfully coping with stress.



Recipe

Apple raisin coffee cake

Makes 20 servings

Ingredients:

- Cooking spray
- 5 cups tart apples, cored, peeled and chopped
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup raisins
- ½ cup pecans, chopped
- ¼ cup canola oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 ½ cups whole-wheat pastry flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly spray a 13 x 9 x 2-inch pan with cooking spray.

In a large mixing bowl, combine apples with sugar, raisins and pecans; mix well. Let stand 30 minutes.

Stir in oil, vanilla and egg. Sift together flours, soda and cinnamon; stir into apple mixture about ⅓ at a time, just enough to moisten dry ingredients. Turn batter into pan. Bake 35 to 40 minutes. Cool cake slightly before serving.

In this issue

Medication and monitoring

Reducing risk

Diet and exercise

Healthy coping

Recipe

Reducing risk

Protect yourself with flu and pneumococcal vaccines

Influenza ("the flu") can be a serious illness, especially for young children, older adults, pregnant women and people with certain chronic conditions. It can even cause hospitalization and death.

Fortunately, there is a vaccine to help protect against this virus. The vaccine can be given once a year and is the best way to reduce the risk of getting and spreading the flu.

Key facts about the flu vaccine

- Young children, especially those under 2, especially young children, older adults, 65 and older, pregnant women, nursing home residents and people with chronic health problems are at the highest risk for complications from the flu.
- Everyone 6 months old and above should get the flu vaccine every year. Try to get it as soon as it becomes available. Although it is best to get early, before the flu starts to spread in your community, getting it later can still help you and is important for your health.
- Babies under 6 months old should not get the flu vaccine.
- You can still get the flu even if you've been vaccinated—but you'll likely have a milder case.
- You cannot get the flu from the flu vaccine.
- Look for information from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) before the start of the flu season. They may have additional recommendations about the flu vaccine at that time.

Pneumococcal disease is caused by bacteria and causes thousands of infections every year. While it's more commonly seen in children, it tends to cause serious complications in adults. There is a vaccine for pneumococcal disease.

Key facts about the pneumococcal vaccine

- Infants, young children and adults 65 years and older should get the pneumococcal vaccine.
- The vaccine is also recommended for people with long-term conditions such as asthma and heart disease; those with a weakened immune system; and smokers, among others.
- There are two pneumococcal vaccines. You may need both vaccines for complete coverage. Ask your doctor what is right for you.
- The pneumococcal vaccine should not be given to pregnant women or people with serious allergies to vaccine ingredients.



Managing stressors

Whether internal or external, stressors can usually be managed. Sometimes, you can learn to respond to the stressor differently. You may try stress-relief techniques. And sometimes, adjusting your thinking to a positive attitude can help. Eating a well-balanced diet and staying active with exercise also are important tools in helping manage stress. Please talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise program.

Apples and raisins provide the moistness, which means less oil can be used in this low-cholesterol and low-sodium coffee cake.



Nutrition per serving: 2 x 2.5-inch slice

Calories	188
Fat	5 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Cholesterol	11 mg
Protein	5 g
Carbohydrates	31 g
Fiber	2 g
Sodium	.68 mg