



**Coronavirus (COVID 19)**  
**Plan for managing your COPD**  
**from the team at**  
**Coltishall Medical Practice**  
**01603 737593**



We are very aware that this is a particularly difficult time for those with ongoing medical conditions and have some information to help you manage your condition. We still have doctors and nurses in the surgery that can speak to you on the phone about your symptoms and prescribe remotely or see you if a consultation is clinically indicated. Please do not ignore any deterioration in your symptoms as early management can keep you well.

Please ensure that you have a suitable amount of your usual medication. We are prescribing as usual a month supply at a time. There is no need to order extra medication as this could lead to a shortage.

Please follow the information given in your COPD action plan.

If you have previously been prescribed a **rescue pack (antibiotics and steroids)** please ensure that you have a supply at home and that it is in date.

### **Manage your COPD/Bronchiectasis well to reduce the risk from coronavirus**

- **Keep taking your preventer inhaler daily as prescribed.** This will help cut your risk of a COPD attack being triggered by any respiratory virus, including coronavirus.
- **Carry your reliever inhaler** (usually blue) with you every day, in case you feel your COPD symptoms flaring up.
- Watch the videos on the asthma UK website to check you are using a good **inhaler technique** <https://.asthma.org.uk/advice/inhalers-medicine-treatments/using-inhalers>

### **Quit smoking**

If you smoke, it's vital to quit. People who smoke are five times more likely to get flu and twice as likely to get pneumonia.

Quitting smoking is one of the best ways to protect yourself from viral infections, including coronavirus.

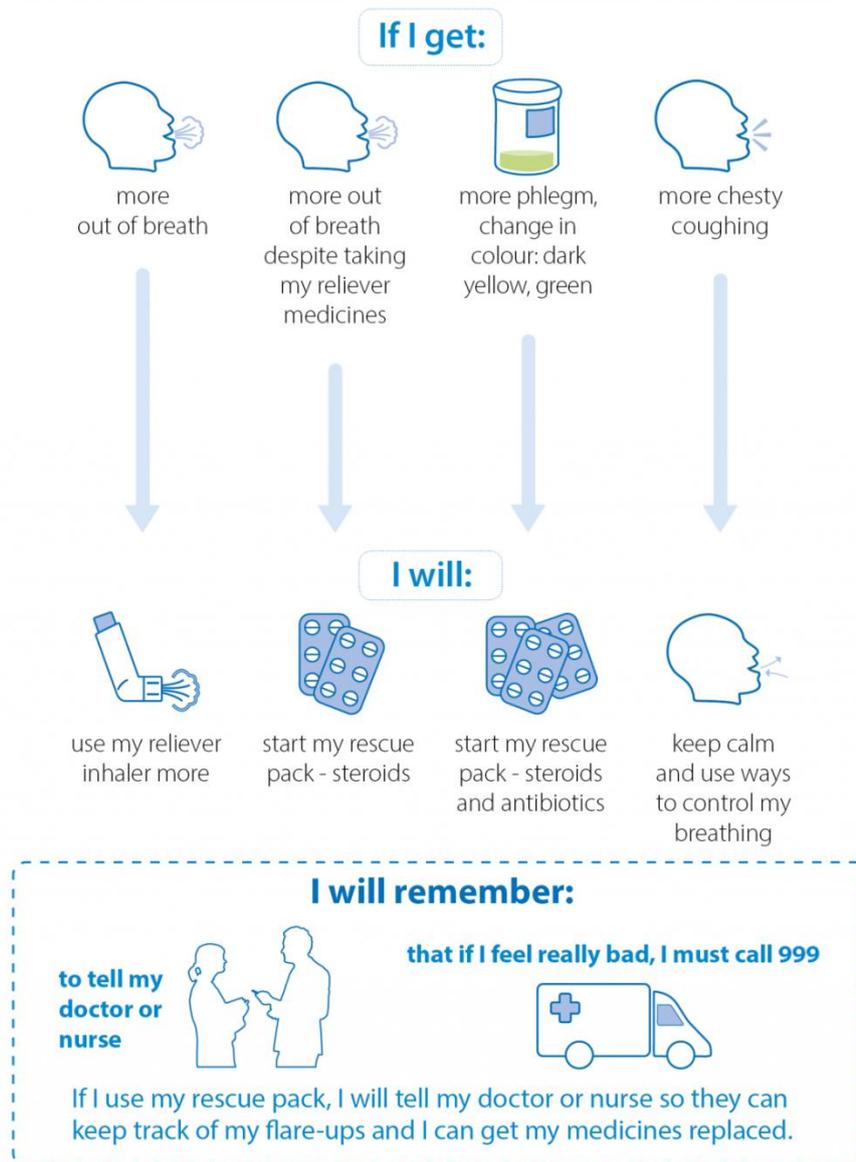
### **Managing COPD Flare-Ups**

It's important that you know the signs of an exacerbation or flare-up in your condition and have a plan in place about what to do. It may be tricky to work out whether new symptoms are due to COVID-19 or due to an exacerbation or flare-up of your condition. Typically, exacerbations of COPD and asthma are not associated with a high fever.

Signs of a flare-up are:

- your breathlessness gets worse and this goes on for some time without getting better
- you cough more
- you produce more sputum
- there's a change in the colour and consistency of your sputum

# Do I feel worse than usual?



Flare-ups can be triggered by an infection or there may be no apparent reason. Watch out for changes in your chest symptoms if you get a cold.

If your breathlessness gets worse, but you have no fever and your sputum is normal for you, the first step is usually to use your reliever inhaler more. Make sure you know how to make changes – such as increasing the dose or how to take your bronchodilator medicine – to help with your symptoms. Many milder flare-ups will respond to this.

Your flare-up plan may include a rescue pack of drugs (antibiotics or steroid tablets or both) that you keep at home. To be certain that you have a flare-up that needs this medication, it's usual to start rescue drugs after using your reliever medication for a day or two.

Make sure you know when:

- **you should start to take steroid tablets.** These help you to get better more quickly, but it's important not to use these too frequently, because of potential long-term side effects. It is also important during this COVID-19 outbreak that they are only used when clinically indicated – see picture above. If you are uncertain discuss with a healthcare professional.
- **you should start to take antibiotics.** This will usually be when, as well as being more breathless despite taking reliever medication for some time, you produce more sputum than

## When to seek help

If your COPD is getting worse and you **don't have symptoms** of COVID-19, make an urgent telephone triage appointment to speak to your GP on **01603 737593**. We may then ask to speak to you by phone call or video call. Please note video calling will require someone in the house to have a valid mobile number and either a smartphone or computer with a camera.

If your COPD is getting worse and you **have symptoms** of COVID-19, please use the 111 online service or call 111. Don't come to the surgery.

When you contact 111 let them know that you have COPD and that you're getting COPD symptoms. Follow the instructions given to you by 111.

Please let the surgery know:

- if you take your rescue pack medication
- if things don't improve within 2 days of starting the rescue pack.

## Social Help

You should make plans to help you cope if the spread of the virus causes significant disruption, or if you get symptoms and need to self-isolate. This might include making sure you know how you would get your medicines, food and other essential items if you had to self-isolate, and thinking about how you would stay in touch with friends and family.

If you need assistance with managing to get essential such as food or medications please call us at the surgery and we can refer for a social prescription. We will need the following information:

Name

Date of Birth

NHS Number (we can help you with that)

Contact Phone Number/s

Address

Also if you specifically require help with prescription medication deliveries you can contact:

Broadland District Council 01508 533 933

North Norfolk District Council 01263 516000

## Help if you're feeling worried

Some people with lung conditions are telling us that they feel very worried and anxious about coronavirus.

It's normal to have these sorts of feelings at a time like this if you live with a lung condition. Here's some tips to help you cope:

- Only look at reliable sources of information about coronavirus that are updated regularly, such as the NHS, to help you feel more in control
- Watch out for bad habits – look for ideas of exercises you can do at home. Try our exercise videos or the NHS website. Don't increase the amount of alcohol you drink
- Keep in touch with your friends and family – in stressful times we cope better with support from those close to us
- Involve your family, including your children, in plans to keep well