

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) Rescue Pack Information Leaflet

A COPD rescue pack is a 5 day supply of steroids (prednisolone) and a 5 day supply of antibiotics (usually amoxicillin or doxycycline) for you to keep at home. Your COPD Self-Management Plan will explain when to use your rescue pack. **It should not be taken for any other medical condition or by any other person.**

Why have I been given a COPD rescue pack?

People who have had a flare up of their COPD in the past are at risk of another flare up in the future. You have been provided with a COPD rescue pack so that if you have another flare up, you can start the right treatment at the right time.

How do I know if I am having a flare up?

You may be having a COPD flare up if you have any of these symptoms:

- You are more breathless than normal and this interferes with you carrying out your daily activities
- New or increased chest tightness
- You are coughing up more sputum (phlegm) than normal
- Your sputum (phlegm) is thicker than normal or it has changed colour
- New or increased coughing

When should I use my COPD rescue pack?

Your COPD Self-Management Plan will explain what you should do if you have a flare up of your COPD. It will tell you when to use your COPD rescue pack. If you do not have a COPD Self-Management Plan, contact your GP, respiratory nurse or your respiratory service.

- **If you still feel breathless after increasing your “reliever” medication and your breathlessness is interfering with you carrying out your daily activities**, you should start your steroids (prednisolone) from your rescue pack. Follow the directions on the label. Continue with your other medicines as usual.
- **If you are coughing up more sputum (phlegm) than normal or it is thicker than normal or it has changed colour**, start your course of antibiotics from your rescue pack by following the directions on the label. Continue with your other medicines as usual.

Contact your GP, respiratory nurse or respiratory service to inform them you have started taking your rescue pack.

What should I do if I forget to take a dose of my COPD rescue pack?

It is important that you take the medicines as prescribed. If you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then carry on taking the next dose at the time it is due. If you have missed a dose and it is almost time for your next dose, **do not take a double dose**, skip the dose you have missed and take the next dose at the time it is due then carry on as normal with any remaining doses until you have finished the medicine/s.

If you start the antibiotics, ALWAYS finish the course even if you feel better before the end.

Are there any side effects?

The patient information leaflet supplied with both of the medicines in your COPD rescue pack lists the more common side effects and other precautions for each medicine. If you are concerned about any side effects, you can ask your pharmacist, GP, respiratory nurse or respiratory service for advice.

What should I do if I don't start to feel better or my symptoms get worse?

If you **don't start to feel better in 2-3 days or you don't think your medicines are helping**, contact your GP, respiratory nurse or respiratory service.

If you develop any emergency symptoms, even after starting the COPD rescue pack, such as:

- Severe breathlessness
- Chest pain
- Inability to complete sentences
- High fever or temperature
- Symptoms worsening very quickly
- New (or worsening of existing) swelling of the legs

You should dial 999 and ask for an ambulance.

What should I do when I am better?

Contact your GP, respiratory nurse or respiratory service to make an appointment for a COPD review. You can request another rescue pack at this review.