

Option 3 Clarithromycin rescue pack patient leaflet

What are COPD rescue medicines?

Your COPD rescue medicines are a supply of standby medications to start if your COPD symptoms get worse before you are able to see your GP.

You will have been prescribed two different COPD rescue medications:

Steroids: Prednisolone 5 mg tablets x 40

Antibiotics: Clarithromycin 500 mg tablets x 14

Please read this leaflet and keep it with your rescue medications.

You should make a note of the expiry date of your medicines and ensure you request another supply from your GP or nurse if you have medicines that are out of date.

The medication in this rescue pack should only be used for flare-ups of your COPD, not for any other medical condition or by any other person.

When should I take my COPD rescue medicines?

Only start your rescue medication if you are having a **flare-up** of your COPD.

Your GP or nurse should have discussed with you how to recognise the signs and symptoms of an exacerbation and what you need to do if you have one – if they haven't book an appointment to discuss this with them.

Early treatment can help you to stay out of hospital and helps to prevent permanent damage to your lungs. Flare-ups are treated by **increasing your reliever inhalers**, taking **steroid tablets** and **antibiotics** (if you have an infection). This section talks you through what to do if you think that you are having a flare-up of your COPD and helps you to decide if you need to start steroid tablets and antibiotics.

Common symptoms of a flare-up are:

- **Being more breathless**
- **Coughing up more sputum (phlegm)**
- **A change in the colour and consistency of sputum (phlegm)**

If you have one of these symptoms:

- **Increase your reliever (blue) inhaler medication to :**

_____ puffs _____ times per day

- Continue with your other inhalers as normal
- Rest and keep indoors. Drink extra fluids. Eat small amounts regularly.

If you have two or more symptoms for over 24 hours, despite using more of your reliever inhaler (blue), start your rescue pack as follows:

1. Prednisolone 5 mg tablets (steroid)	Take EIGHT tablets immediately and then take EIGHT tablets again as a single dose each morning, with food , for FOUR days
2. If one of the symptoms is a change in the colour of your sputum (phlegm), especially if it is becoming green or brown, you should also start the antibiotic tablets - Clarithromycin 500 mg	Take ONE tablet twice a day until course complete.

Do not start the antibiotic (Clarithromycin) unless your sputum has changed colour.

Contact your GP / nurse straight away if your symptoms get worse after starting your rescue medication OR you are no better after two days of taking your rescue medication

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

- Too breathless to speak in sentences
- Feel drowsy
- Not able to eat or drink
- You have a high fever
- Coughing up blood
- Have chest pain
- New (or worsening of existing) swelling of the legs

Contact your GP immediately

This includes out of hours as they will redirect you.

If you need to go to the hospital please take all your medications with you.

Call 999 and ask for an ambulance if you experience any of the following:

- Confusion
- Severe central chest pain
- Feel exceptionally drowsy
- Symptoms come on very quickly
- Blue lips, fingers or toes rapidly

Take _____ puffs of _____ (reliever)

Use a large volume spacer if you have one while you are waiting for an ambulance.

What should I do if I've forgotten to take a dose?

It is important that you take the medication as prescribed.

However, if you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then carry on taking your next dose at its regular time.

If you realise you have missed a dose but it is almost time for your next dose, do not take a double dose, skip the dose you have missed, take the next dose at its regular time and then carry on as normal with any remaining doses.

Are there any side effects?

All medications may cause side effects.

With short courses such as your COPD rescue medicines, most people don't have any problems.

The patient information leaflet supplied with each medication list the more common side effects and other precautions for each medication. Please read these leaflets.

If you are concerned about any side effects please contact your GP, nurse or community pharmacist for further information.

What else should I do?

- **If you start your rescue pack, you must contact your GP practice/practice nurse within 48 hours to book an urgent appointment to see them – tell the receptionist you have a flare-up of your COPD and have started the rescue pack.**
- Alternatively if you're under the care of the community matrons, you can contact them instead of the GP practice.
- **Your GP/practice nurse will also need to review you in about two weeks to check you have recovered from the flare-up, whether any changes in your ongoing treatment for your COPD is needed and to give you a further supply of the rescue medications – book an appointment to see them.**