

Early Warning Signs (EWS)

They could save your life



Why it's important?



- It's an important part of managing your illness
- Knowing when signs and symptoms start changing can lead to quicker medical interventions
- Accurate and quick assessment's help you and your doctor decide of appropriate treatment

Early Warning Signs

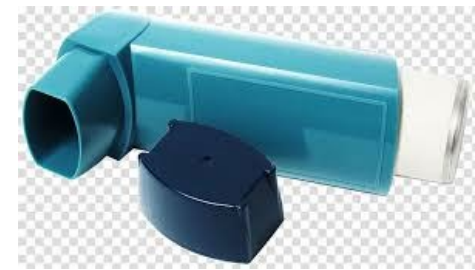
- Increased/decreased amount of sputum, thickness, odor and color
- Increase in shortness of breath /wheezing/chest tightness with activities or rest
- Increase fatigue/tiredness
- Feeling ill, or “off”
- Not feeling hungry or wanting to eat
- Swelling in your hands or ankle/feet
- Trouble sleeping-Using more pillows, or sleeping in a chair instead of a bed to avoid shortness of breath
- An unexplained increase or decrease in weight
- Increase use of “rescue” inhaler
- Forgetfulness, confusion, slurring of speech and sleepiness

Common Causes of Flare-ups

- Lung or sinus infection
- Very hot and humid weather
- Very cold weather
- Air pollution
- Tobacco smoke
- Strong smells
- Not taking your meds the right way
- Mold
- Pollen
- Stress



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When to Call the Doctor

- Call immediately if forgetfulness, confusion, slurring of speech or sleepiness occurs
- 6-8 hours if shortness of breath/ wheezing does not stop
- Increased use of rescue inhaler. More than 10-12 times per day
- 24-48 hours if changes in sputum persists
- Ankle swelling that last after a night of sleep with feet elevated
- Awaken short of breath more than once a night.
- Fatigue that last more 24-48 hours



Have an Action Plan

- Action Plan is a plan developed to provide information and advice for treatment and management of your lung disease
- Plan is completed by patients with the help of their physician &/or healthcare provider. A written contract between you and your physician in how you will recognize and manage your “flares”
- Inform family members of this plan
- Plan should be updated yearly or as needed

Things that can make your symptoms worse

- Don't take Codeine or any cough depressant
- No over the counter nasal spray for more than 3 days
- Do not increase liter flow of Oxygen
- Do not change your medications on your own
- **DO NOT SMOKE!**

Peak Flow Meters

- A device used to measure how well your lung disease is being controlled. Valuable tool in assessing “flares” or exacerbations as well helping in identifying “triggers” esp for asthma
- Helps when to seek medical help, effectiveness of disease management and medication



Laughter is the BEST Medicine

