There are some things you shouldn’t do when you have COPD. Smoking, using drugs, and drinking too much alcohol are 3 big ones.

**Quit smoking and avoid drugs**

The most important lifestyle change you can make to manage COPD is to quit smoking. It’s also important to avoid using illicit drugs. There is no “safe” amount to smoke or use. Continuing to smoke or use drugs can increase symptoms and make your COPD get worse faster. If you need help saying “no” to tobacco and drugs, talk to your health care provider. Your provider can give you information, connect you with helpful services, and write prescriptions for medications and products that can help you quit smoking. For help quitting smoking, you can also call Quit Partner at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). TTY users call 1-877-777-6534. These calls are free. There is no cost to members for this service.

**Limit alcohol**

Drinking too much alcohol can cause your COPD to flare up and can decrease your lung function. It can also decrease your ability to clear mucus from your airway. Another reason to say “no” to alcohol is that it may interfere with some of your medications. This can lead to a serious reaction.

**Stay strong and say “no”**

It can be hard, but saying “no” to smoking, drugs, and alcohol can help you manage your COPD. Make the decision to treat your body right!

Sources: Healthline, Mayo Clinic
Taking Charge of Your COPD
COPD can become worse over time. This makes it important to work with your provider, develop a treatment plan, and get the right tests.

See your provider regularly
Schedule regular medical appointments based on your current stage of COPD and your provider’s recommendations. Your provider may want to see you every 3 – 6 months if your symptoms are under control. If your COPD is more severe, you may need to have monthly appointments. Your provider may also refer you to a specialist who treats respiratory conditions. This type of specialist is called a pulmonologist. You can also ask your provider about pulmonary rehabilitation. This program involves education, supervised exercise, breathing techniques, nutrition advice, and emotional support. You use this program with your other treatment.

Develop a treatment plan
It is important to develop a treatment plan with your provider. Give your provider as much specific information as you can. Talk about your symptoms and how often you need to use your rescue inhaler. The more information your provider has, the better they can help you create a good treatment plan.

Pay attention to your lung function
Having your lung function tested is an important part of monitoring and treating COPD. Lung function tests measure how much air you can breathe in and out, how fast the air moves, and how much oxygen your lungs deliver to your blood. Talk with your provider about how often you should have your lung function tested. One way you can help improve your lung function is by using an inspirometer at home. You can use this device to practice breathing better by taking slow, deep breaths. There is a dial on the device that moves when you inhale, measuring the volume of the air you can breathe in. The more, the better! Your provider will let you know how often you should be using your inspirometer throughout the day.

Take care
Doing these 3 things will help you manage your COPD for the long term!

Medication Matters
It is important to take your medication exactly as prescribed to treat symptoms and prevent complications. Some kinds of medication you need to take regularly. Some you take only when needed. Don’t change your dose or stop taking your medication without talking to your provider—even if you are feeling better! If you stop or change your medication, your symptoms may return.

Talk to your provider about any concerns you have. Together you can find what works best for you. Regular provider visits combined with the right medication can help keep your symptoms in check.

Source: Mayo Clinic
©iStock.com/Ichapple
What Are Comorbid Conditions?
What does it mean if you have comorbid conditions? It means you have 2 or more conditions at the same time. If you have COPD, this means having COPD and one or more other conditions. Comorbid conditions are common with COPD. That’s because low oxygen levels affect other organ systems. Some conditions that may affect those with COPD are heart disease, osteoporosis, diabetes, anemia, anxiety, gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), and glaucoma. Sleeping disorders, lung infections, and cognitive decline are also common.

“Comorbid” is a scary word, but it just means you have 2 or more conditions at the same time.

Keeping your COPD under control may help prevent these conditions. It can also lessen their symptoms. Talk to your provider if you have concerns about your comorbid conditions.

Source: Respiratory Health Association

Can’t Sleep?
COPD symptoms, including difficulty breathing, chronic coughing, and chest tightening, can make it hard to get to sleep and stay asleep. Some of the medications used to treat COPD can also cause sleep problems. What’s more, your breathing naturally slows down when you sleep. If you have COPD, all of this can cause you to wake up. Tell your provider if you have trouble sleeping. They may recommend you use supplemental oxygen. Raising the head of your bed or using extra pillows to prop yourself up may also help.

Source: National Sleep Foundation
COPD Got Your Appetite?

COPD can affect your appetite. A big reason for this is inflammation. COPD causes your lungs to become inflamed, and when your lungs are inflamed, they take up more room. That means there is less open space between your stomach and your lungs.

When you eat, those 2 organs can push against each other. This is often uncomfortable and can reduce your desire to eat. Food itself can be a source of inflammation, including foods that are salty, spicy, or high in fiber. Caffeinated or carbonated drinks can also cause problems. Avoiding these things can reduce inflammation and make you feel more like eating.

Not surprisingly, if you don’t feel like eating, you may lose weight without meaning to. In addition to poor appetite, other aspects of COPD can make it difficult to stay at a healthy weight. Breathing burns calories, and since damaged lungs have to work a lot harder than healthy lungs, they can burn up to 10 times as many calories as healthy lungs! So it’s doubly important to include meal plans and proper nutrition in your health plan.

Talk with your provider about your diet and eating habits. They can work with you to make sure you are getting enough nutrients and maintaining a stable weight while avoiding foods that can make your COPD worse.

Caregiver Support

When you have COPD, you need people to help you. You can help them by letting them know that their good health is important to you. Encourage them to talk about the stresses of caregiving with family and friends instead of bottling it up. You might suggest they join a local support group for caregivers. Information about such support groups is available from local health and human services departments and health care providers. Also be sure to let them know it’s okay for them to take a break! Remind them that in order to take care of someone else, they must first take care of themselves!

Coping with COPD

Living with COPD isn’t easy. Even with ongoing treatment and support, there may be times when your symptoms become worse for days or even weeks. Certain activities can become more difficult as COPD progresses. Let your provider know when this happens. They may adjust your treatment plan. Give yourself plenty of time to complete your tasks so you can take breaks and rest if you need to. Ask if someone can help you with certain chores and look into support groups in your community.

If you feel breathless, use your emergency inhaler or oral medication. Take a break from what you are doing and rest until this feeling goes away. If you use oxygen and have feelings of breathlessness, talk to your provider. Do not adjust your own oxygen levels. This can cause more harm than good. Keep taking your long-term and quick-relief medications even if you are feeling better. Stopping medications can make breathing issues worse.

Source: Mayo Clinic
Clearing your airways of mucus (sputum) by coughing can help you breathe better. Drinking plenty of water and using a humidifier can help loosen the mucus, making it easier to cough up. If you notice that you are coughing more than usual, it may mean that your body is making more mucus. This can happen when you are exposed to triggers or irritants like air pollution. Try to avoid these if possible. A change in the color and consistency of your mucus may mean you have an infection. Be sure to tell your provider if you notice this. If you have a constant increase in coughing or a hard time breathing, talk to your provider and get medical help if needed.

Care Coordination and Case Management: We’re Here for You

PrimeWest Health provides Care Coordination and Case Management programs to help keep members healthy. These programs let us work with you and your health care providers to make sure you get the services you need. Your care coordinator/case manager can do the following:

- Help you when you have questions about your health care or prescriptions
  - Find answers to your questions about what your medications are for, why you are taking them, and how to take them safely. Get help finding a new health care provider or specialist such as a behavioral health specialist or dentist.
- Schedule medical appointments as needed
  - It’s important to see your provider as recommended. But sometimes it’s hard to make an appointment. Your care coordinator or case manager can help with that!
- Help you learn good health practices that may prevent problems
  - Get information on a wide range of health topics and work on a step-by-step action plan to reach your personal health goals.
- Help arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home
  - Make sure you are getting the services you need. Get your care needs assessed and get help setting up assistive services.

PrimeWest Health encourages you to take advantage of these programs. Let your care coordinator or case manager know when and how they can help you get the care and services you need. If you do not know who your care coordinator or case manager is, call one of the following:

- Jennifer at 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5342
- Member Services at 1-866-431-0801
- TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711

These calls are free.
NOTE: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider’s advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.
Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

Mلاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d’une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

 примечание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Атención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.
Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. PrimeWest Health does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

Auxiliary Aids and Services: PrimeWest Health provides auxiliary aids and services, like qualified interpreters or information in accessible formats, free of charge and in a timely manner to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in our health care programs. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

Language Assistance Services: PrimeWest Health provides translated documents and spoken language interpreting, free of charge and in a timely manner, when language assistance services are necessary to ensure limited English speakers have meaningful access to our information and services. Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

Civil Rights Complaints

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You may contact any of the following four agencies directly to file a discrimination complaint.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights (OCR)
You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion (in some cases)
Contact the **OCR** directly to file a complaint:
Director
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 515F
HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019
TDD 800-537-7697
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

**Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)**
In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the **MDHR** directly to file a complaint:
Minnesota Department of Human Rights
540 Fairview Avenue North
Suite 201
St. Paul, MN 55104
651-539-1100 (voice)
800-657-3704 (toll free)
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)
651-296-9042 (fax)
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us (email)

**Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)**
You have the right to file a complaint with DHS if you believe you have been discriminated against in our health care programs because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

Complaints must be in writing and filed within 180 days of the date you discovered the alleged discrimination. The complaint must contain your name and address and describe the discrimination you are complaining about. After we get your complaint, we will review it and notify you in writing about whether we have authority to investigate. If we do, we will investigate the complaint.
DHS will notify you in writing of the investigation’s outcome. You have the right to appeal the outcome if you disagree with the decision. To appeal, you must send a written request to have DHS review the investigation outcome. Be brief and state why you disagree with the decision. Include additional information you think is important.

If you file a complaint in this way, the people who work for the agency named in the complaint cannot retaliate against you. This means they cannot punish you in any way for filing a complaint. Filing a complaint in this way does not stop you from seeking out other legal or administrative actions.

Contact DHS directly to file a discrimination complaint:
Civil Rights Coordinator
Minnesota Department of Human Services
Equal Opportunity and Access Division
P.O. Box 64997
St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

PrimeWest Health Complaint Notice
You have the right to file a complaint with PrimeWest Health if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information
- disability (including mental or physical impairment)
- marital status
- age
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- sexual orientation
- national origin
- race
- color
- religion
- creed
- public assistance status
- political beliefs

You can file a complaint and ask for help in filing a complaint in person or by mail, phone, fax, or email at:
Rebecca Fuller
Civil Rights Coordinator
PrimeWest Health
3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308
Toll Free: 1-866-431-0801
TTY: 1-800-627-3529 or 711
Fax: 1-320-762-8750
Email: rebecca.fuller@primewest.org

American Indian Health Statement
American Indians can continue or begin to use tribal and Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics. We will not require prior approval or impose any conditions for you to get services at these clinics. For elders age 65 years and older this includes Elderly Waiver (EW) services accessed through the tribe. If a doctor or other provider in a tribal or IHS clinic refers you to a provider in our network, we will not require you to see your primary care provider prior to the referral.