

Am I having a COPD flare-up?

Sometimes people with COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) have symptoms that are worse than the usual “ups and downs” of good days and bad days. This is called a flare-up or an exacerbation.

How to identify a flare-up

With a flare-up, you may have changes in your symptoms, such as:

- Increased shortness of breath
- Changes in the color and amount of phlegm (mucus)
- More coughing

It is important to know what is usual for you day to day. Changes could mean that you are having a flare-up. To understand how you tend to feel on a regular day when you are not having a flare-up, put a check mark by the statements below.

On a regular day, when I am not having a flare-up:	
What makes me short of breath?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Strenuous exercise	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking at my own pace on level ground
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking up a slight hill or walking quickly on level ground	<input type="checkbox"/> Dressing or undressing
<input type="checkbox"/> Walking a short distance for a few minutes on level ground	
What is the usual color of my mucus?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Clear	<input type="checkbox"/> Deep yellow
<input type="checkbox"/> Green	<input type="checkbox"/> Brown
<input type="checkbox"/> Red	
I cough up this amount of mucus:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Teaspoon	<input type="checkbox"/> Tablespoon
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	
How often do I cough?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rarely	<input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes
<input type="checkbox"/> Every day	<input type="checkbox"/> All day, every day

Changes in your usual, day-to-day symptoms may mean that you are having a flare-up. You may need a change in your medicine or more medical treatment.

Be on the alert for flare-ups.
Talk to your healthcare provider about actions to take when your symptoms change. Ask about a COPD Action Plan.

