

Understand Where You Are in the Illness

This tool allows for open conversations between patient, family / caregivers, and health care teams to talk about **where things are at now** and what to expect later. Revisit this roadmap over time.

The general pattern of COPD is typically a gradual decline with intermittent episodes of sudden flare ups.

Use the space below to discuss with your team and take notes on:

1. Your current stage
2. What's unique to your experience
3. What can be done to maximize quality of life at any stage

BEGINNING STAGE SIGNS

- Breathless with activity, e.g. climbing stairs
- Intermittent wheezing
- Chronic lingering cough
- Coughing up mucus
- Tightness in the chest with activity

MIDDLE STAGE SIGNS

- Breathless when walking at own pace
- Decreased exercise tolerance
- Frequent wheezing
- Increased chronic cough and sputum
- Periodic flare ups may require new medications or ER visits
- Disruption to sleep, fatigue

LATE STAGE SIGNS

- Breathless after minimal exertion
- Spend more time sitting
- More frequent flare ups, may require hospitalization
- Decreased appetite
- Persistent fatigue

END STAGE SIGNS

- Breathless at rest
- Spend more time in bed
- Weight and muscle loss
- May require oxygen therapy

NOTES ON MANAGING EACH STAGE

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Financial contribution:



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COPD PLANNING ROADMAP

Prepare for Key Life Changes

How to Use: Review this table to understand what key life changes to expect and things to do in each stage.

	Key Life Changes	Things to Do
BEGINNING STAGE	Learn ways to slow progression & lessen symptoms	Prioritize lung health by: • Consider quitting smoking and getting updated on pneumonia and flu shots • Take medications as prescribed • Limit exposure to triggers (e.g. pet dander, dust, respiratory illnesses) • Integrate good nutrition, regular physical exercise, and social engagement • Make time for medical visits and pulmonary rehab programs
MIDDLE STAGE	Manage increased flare ups & symptoms Address personal affairs early	Use self-management strategies: • Continue with healthy lifestyle changes as mentioned above • Learn techniques for effective coughing, breathing, and clearing phlegm Designate person(s) for healthcare support, including future healthcare oversight: • Companion for appointments • Advance Care Plan discussions • Substitute Decision Maker / Power of Attorney for health care • Point person(s) for coordination, communication and documentation of care
LATE STAGE	Arrange supports to manage personal care as illness progresses	Assess needs and get support to maintain daily routines: • Cleaning, groceries, meal preparation, banking, home affairs • Medication management • Exercise, social interaction and companionship • Transportation • Emotional support • Support for family caregivers to prevent burnout Use techniques for maximizing energy and independence: • Make home modifications to enable mobility (e.g. walker, wheelchair, stair lift) • Enhanced home care supports (e.g. public home care, private care, community) • Consider living arrangements (e.g. one floor living, retirement home)
END STAGE	Plan for major changes in physical function & independence Prepare for End of Life	Assess ability to provide care at home: • Add home care supports for feeding, bathing, hygiene, dressing, toileting • Ensure action plan is in place for symptom flare ups • Ongoing support for family caregivers to prevent burnout Make care decisions with a focus on quality of life: • Review which medications are no longer needed • Discuss preferences for Do-Not-Resuscitate or Allow-Natural-Death Manage additional personal affairs: • Share critical account access, passwords, important contacts • Complete Will & Estate Planning • Talk about funeral and burial plans, legacy leaving • Discuss preferred location of care (e.g. hospice supports)

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