

My COPD Hospital Stay Checklist:

What to know and ask



This checklist is for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) who are in hospital for a flare-up (also called an exacerbation). It helps you, your family and support people understand the care you should receive, the questions to ask before you go home, and simple steps to help you keep getting better at home.

Use it like this:



Tick the box if it has been done



If not, ask the question shown



Before I go home

Understanding my condition

Knowing about your COPD can help you manage it better.

I understand what COPD is and how it affects me

My healthcare team has explained my condition in a way I understand

I know where to find more help or information

? Ask

Can you explain COPD again in simple terms or give me information I can read at home?

Breathing test (spirometry)

Spirometry is the only way to diagnose COPD. You should have had this test before, or be referred for a test after you leave hospital.

I have had a spirometry test before or during my stay

I have been referred for spirometry after I go home

? Ask

Have I had a spirometry test to confirm my diagnosis of COPD? If not, can you refer me for one?

My medicines

Knowing how and when to use your medicines helps you stay well.

I know how to use all my medicines, including any new ones from this hospital stay

I know when to use each medicine

I know how long to keep using each medicine

? Ask

Can you explain when and how to use my medicines?

A nurse or pharmacist has checked how I use my inhaler(s)

? Ask

Can you check how I use my inhaler?

Pulmonary rehabilitation

Exercise and education programs help you stay well and out of hospital.

I have been referred to a pulmonary rehabilitation program or have been given an exercise program by a physiotherapist

? Ask

Can you refer me to a pulmonary rehabilitation program?

Symptom support and palliative care

Palliative care helps you live well and feel as comfortable as possible when you have severe COPD. It's not just for end-of-life care. It can include support for symptoms that are hard to manage like breathlessness and can help you and your loved ones plan the care you would or wouldn't want if you became very unwell in the future.

I have talked to my care team about what palliative care is and how it can help me live well with COPD

I have information about how to get palliative care support in my community if I need it

? Ask

Can we talk about palliative care and how I can get support if I need it?

I have talked with my doctor about the type of care I would or wouldn't want if I became very unwell (advance care planning)

? Ask

Can we talk about an advance care plan?

Smoking or vaping

Stopping smoking or vaping is the best thing you can do for your lungs.

I was asked if I smoke or vape

I was offered help to quit (such as Quitline or nicotine replacement)

? Ask

What support can I get to help me quit?

Care after I leave hospital

Follow-up care with your GP after you leave hospital helps you keep getting better and lowers the chance of needing to come back to hospital.

I have a summary of my hospital stay (a discharge summary), and it has been sent to my GP

? Ask

Can you go through my discharge summary with me, and can I have a copy to take with me?

I have an appointment with my GP within 7 days

? Ask

Can you help me book a GP appointment?

Date & time	Health professional	Health service	Notes/actions to do
e.g. 02/07/25 10:00am	GP	Brisbane Family Medical Clinic	Follow up referral for spirometry



After I go home

Leaving hospital is just the start of getting better. These steps will help you stay well and avoid another flare-up.

1 Follow your COPD Action Plan and watch for warning signs

I have a copy of my COPD Action Plan

I know the early warning signs of a flare-up – more breathless, coughing more, changes in sputum (phlegm), or feeling unwell

I know what to do if my symptoms change or get worse, and when to seek help

2 Take your medicines correctly

I know which medicines to take, when to take them, and how long to keep using them

I know how to use my inhalers the right way

I will finish any steroids or antibiotics given to me in hospital

3 Keep up with follow-up care

I have a GP appointment booked within 7 days of leaving hospital

I will ask my GP or nurse to check I am up to date with vaccinations that protect me from respiratory illnesses

I will attend pulmonary rehabilitation, or see a physiotherapist for an exercise program

I know who to contact for help or questions after I go home



Tip: Keep this checklist and your Action Plan somewhere easy to find, like on the fridge, so you and your family know what to do if your COPD flares up again.



Call Lung Foundation Australia's Respiratory Care Nurse Service for free telephone support from experienced nurses who understand COPD. They can answer your questions, explain your condition and medicines, and connect you with services and information to support your recovery at home.

Call **1800 654 301** or email enquiries@lungfoundation.com.au