

CHARLESTON INTERNAL MEDICINE WANTS TO HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR COPD THIS WINTER



Daylight savings time has passed which means the days are getting shorter and the weather is getting colder! For some, the cold weather and shorter days are a refreshing change.

However, if you suffer from COPD, chances are you dread winter.

One of your top priorities with COPD should be to stay healthy and avoid getting sick. During the winter months, cold and flu season is at its peak, it's important that you are extra vigilant on your quest to stay healthy. If possible, do your best to avoid large crowds and make sure all of your friends and family know not to come over when they are feeling under the weather. Unfortunately, there is no vaccine for the common cold. The best way to protect yourself from falling ill with the flu is to get your flu shot! Another key vaccine to speak with your doctor about is the pneumonia vaccine. By staying on top of your vaccinations you can drastically reduce your chances of getting sick.

Tips to Help Manage Your COPD in Winter

Take all of your medications as prescribed

Keep regularly scheduled appointments with your CIM provider for management of your COPD

Follow your COPD Action Plan

Call us early with new or worsening symptoms

Stay Hydrated -Unless your provider has advised otherwise, drink WATER, WATER, WATER! Water is the best way to keep mucus thin so it can easily be coughed up.

Stay Active- As long as you are remaining active, you are proactively treating and managing your COPD. Here are some examples of how you can stay active in the

comfort of your own home: walking, strength exercises, and stretching. If you attend Pulmonary Rehab and can get out its important to keep your appointments.



Use Proper Breathing Techniques- While you are out in the cold or anytime you feel short of breath; using pursed lip breathing will help you control your breathing rate, reduce the feeling of breathlessness, and help warm the

air using your body's natural air warmer.... your nose! Inhale slowly through you nose and exhale slowly through your mouth.

Breathing in the Extreme Cold- When it's this cold out, it's best to stay inside. However, if you must go outside cover your nose and mouth with a scarf to give the air more time to warm up before it gets to your lungs.



Call the office (304-720-2345) to schedule a same day appointment when you need us!

When to call the office:

- When you are in the yellow on your COPD Action Plan.
If you don't have a COPD action plan, consider calling the office to schedule with our Chronic Care Manager to develop your personal plan to help you better control your COPD. This is a free visit.
- Your shortness of breath is worse than normal despite taking your breathing medications as directed.
- You are taking your breathing medication more often or it is not helping?
- You feel like you have a chest cold?
- Cough has changed-you are producing more mucus, mucus is thicker than normal, or the color of your mucus has changed.
- You have less energy than normal and aren't eating well.
- Before going to the Emergency Department for non-life-threatening emergency.

CIM is here to help! If you have questions about your COPD, or your health in general, please give us a call. (304) 720-2345

