

Chronic lower respiratory disease—mainly chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)—was the fourth leading cause of death in the United States in 2019.¹ Approximately 15 million Americans experience airflow limitations, cough, and shortness of breath due to COPD.² Many resources are available to support family physicians in their care of patients with COPD. You can use this guide to identify online resources to help activate your patients and support them in self-management at each point in their care. Many of these resources can be printed out during office visits for your patients who have limited access to technology.

Resources for Physicians	Resources to Share With Patients
<p>DIAGNOSIS</p> <p>The International Primary Care Respiratory Group (IPCRG) offers its Desktop Helper information sheets on the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirometry – This tool summarizes how to interpret spirometry results to help evaluate the cause of dyspnea or confirm the diagnosis of COPD. www.ipcrg.org/dthspirometry • Early Diagnosis of COPD – This Desktop Helper promotes early diagnosis and intervention, as well as addressing barriers to diagnosis and case identification. www.ipcrg.org/dthearlydiagcopd • Improving Care for Women With COPD – Women who have COPD are more likely to be misdiagnosed.³ This IPCRG tool can be helpful when evaluating respiratory symptoms in women. www.ipcrg.org/dth8 	<p>The COPD Foundation's resource for newly diagnosed patients offers reassurance, support, definitions, and tips. Share it with your patients and their families upon COPD diagnosis. https://copdf.co/3ylwppy</p> <p>The Respiratory Health Association's COPD Caregiver's Toolkit provides education, resources, and tools to empower COPD caregivers to support themselves and the COPD patient under their care. It can help your patients and their loved ones prepare for COPD visits and manage their care. This toolkit can be purchased for \$20. https://resphealth.org/healthy-lungs/copd/rha-copd-initiatives/copd-caregivers-toolkit/</p> <p>COPD.com is a resource designed to educate patients and their families on COPD. The website offers guidance for talking to their physician or another health care professional about COPD and also includes information on treatment options and how to make a COPD Action Plan. www.copd.com</p>
<p>ASSESSMENT AND PHARMACOTHERAPY</p> <p>Two primary tools are used to assess and track the impact of dyspnea and COPD on patient health: the Modified Medical Research Council (mMRC) Dyspnea Scale and the COPD Assessment Test (CAT). The mMRC Dyspnea Scale, which is available online in the 2022 GOLD Report (Table 2.5 on page 30), is a simple measure of breathlessness; however, a more comprehensive assessment of symptoms is recommended to better guide therapy.⁴ The CAT is a more comprehensive assessment of the effects of COPD on patient health. Both tools help in the assessment of symptom burden and functional status and can be useful for monitoring COPD progression or response to treatment, but the CAT is much more sensitive and likely to change with therapy. A decrease or increase of 2 or greater in a patient's CAT score suggests either improvement or disease progression, respectively.⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mMRC Dyspnea Scale – https://goldcopd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/GOLD-REPORT-2022-v1.1-22Nov2021_WMV.pdf • CAT – www.catestonline.org/content/dam/global/catestonline/questionnaires/English_CAT_combined.pdf <p>The GOLD recommendations offer guidance for initial pharmacologic treatment of COPD (Figure 4.2 on page 92) based on a patient's exacerbations and mMRC or CAT score. Consult this chart when determining initial treatment plans for your COPD patients. https://goldcopd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/GOLD-REPORT-2022-v1.1-22Nov2021_WMV.pdf</p> <p>The GOLD recommendations also include algorithms for assessing and modifying pharmacotherapy (Figure 4.4 on page 93) based on concerns about dyspnea or exacerbations. These algorithms can be used along with your clinical judgment to determine the appropriate course of treatment for your COPD patients. When both dyspnea and exacerbations are a problem, use the exacerbation algorithm. https://goldcopd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/GOLD-REPORT-2022-v1.1-22Nov2021_WMV.pdf</p>	<p>The COPD Foundation's COPD Educational Video Series on proper use of inhalers and nebulizers can be viewed by patients and staff during office visits to support education and guide patients in the use of their device. Have your patients use these videos to check their inhaler technique at home. The videos are available on the COPD Foundation website or in the foundation's free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/Educational-Materials-Resources/Educational-Video-Series.aspx • Mobile app: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide/Patient-Caregiver-Track.aspx <p>The American Lung Association offers a medication tracker that can help patients keep track of the COPD medications they are using. www.lung.org/getmedia/aa648598-c904-410c-b985-045e754e0ee9/medication-tracker_v2.pdf</p>

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<p>PHARMACOTHERAPY, CONTINUED</p> <p>The COPD Foundation's COPD Educational Video Series on proper use of inhalers and nebulizers provides important information to help you and your care team review device technique so you can support patient education during office visits. These videos are available on the COPD Foundation website or in the foundation's free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/Educational-Materials-Resources/Educational-Video-Series.aspx Mobile app: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/I-am-a-Healthcare-Provider/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide.aspx 	
<p>NONPHARMACOLOGIC THERAPY</p> <p>The 2022 GOLD Report provides recommendations on initial nonpharmacologic therapy for COPD (pages 97-106), including immunizations, smoking cessation, supplemental oxygen, physical activity, and pulmonary rehabilitation. Consult these recommendations when determining initial treatment and follow-up for your COPD patients. https://goldcopd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/GOLD-REPORT-2022-v1.1-22Nov2021_WMV.pdf</p> <p>The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' National Coverage Determination for Home Use of Oxygen covers indications and limitations of durable medical equipment coverage for home oxygen therapy. Consult this information to determine if a patient's oxygen therapy is covered under their insurance plan. www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/ncd-details.aspx?NCDId=169</p> <p>The COPD Foundation's free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store, includes exercise videos that are used in pulmonary rehabilitation and can be used by patients at home. These videos are geared toward individuals with activity limitations (e.g., mMRC score of 2 or greater). Consider sharing the link with your staff for patient use. www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/I-am-a-Healthcare-Provider/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide.aspx</p> <p>Smoking cessation is one of the most important treatments for COPD and can be supported through telehealth. The American Academy of Family Physicians' (AAFP's) Tobacco Cessation Telehealth Guide provides information about the role of telehealth in tobacco cessation, cessation insurance coverage, and the ASK and ACT approach to supporting patients' quit attempts. www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient_care/tobacco/tobacco-cessation-telehealth-guide.pdf</p> <p>Knowing when and how to add oxygen therapy can be difficult. This guide provides useful information when considering supplemental oxygen and includes practical suggestions for ordering and monitoring. https://foundation.chestnet.org/lung-health-a-z/oxygen-therapy/</p>	<p>The American Thoracic Society's Patient Education Information Series offers a fact sheet focused on pulmonary rehabilitation. When you recommend pulmonary rehabilitation, provide patients with this resource to help them decide if it is the right step for them at the time. www.thoracic.org/patients/patient-resources/resources/pulmonary-rehab.pdf</p> <p>The Respiratory Health Association's Living Better Together: Project STRENGTH (Support for Transitioning Rehabilitation and Exercise Now Going to Home) is a resource for patients with COPD and their caregivers that describes various parts of home pulmonary rehabilitation. Direct patients to this webpage for more information about rehabilitation and exercise in the home. https://resphealth.org/project-strength-pulmonary-rehab-at-home-resources/</p> <p>The COPD Foundation's free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store, includes exercise videos that are used in pulmonary rehabilitation and can be used by patients at home. These videos are geared toward individuals with activity limitations (e.g., mMRC score of 2 or greater). www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide/Patient-Caregiver-Track.aspx</p> <p>Smoking cessation is one of the most important treatments for COPD, but it is often difficult. Patients may need to try multiple approaches before they are able to quit for good. The American Lung Association offers tools, tips, and support for individuals who want to quit smoking or vaping or help a loved one quit. www.lung.org/quit-smoking</p> <p>For patients newly diagnosed with COPD, the COPD Foundation provides information about the importance of smoking cessation to slow disease progression and also highlights resources to support quit attempts. www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/I-am-New-to-COPD/Quitting-Smoking.aspx</p> <p>Beginning on home oxygen can be confusing and frightening. This resource provide information on why and how to use oxygen therapy including how to talk to the company that provides oxygen to your home and tips for travelling on oxygen therapy. https://foundation.chestnet.org/lung-health-a-z/oxygen-therapy/</p>

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<p>FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING</p> <p>The AAFP's Clinical Practice Guideline Pharmacologic Management of COPD Exacerbations reviews the evidence regarding pharmacologic treatments of acute exacerbations of COPD and provides clinical recommendations. Consult this guideline when your patient experiences an acute exacerbation. www.aafp.org/family-physician/patient-care/clinical-recommendations/all-clinical-recommendations/copd-exacerbation-management.html</p> <p>The COPD Foundation's COPD Action Plan can be downloaded and printed from the foundation's website. An interactive version is available in the free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app, which can be downloaded from Google Play or the Apple App Store. It can be used to assess your patient's goals and include their preferences when making care decisions, and you can update their plan as needed. The COPD Action Plan also gives your patient specific information about when to call 911 or seek immediate medical care.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online: www.copdfoundation.org/Praxis/Resource-Repository/Search/Article/404/My-COPD-Action-Plan.aspx • Mobile app: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/I-am-a-Healthcare-Provider/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide.aspx <p>The American Lung Association offers a COPD Action Plan that can be downloaded and printed. You and your patient can complete the plan together to support their self-management. www.lung.org/getmedia/c7657648-a30f-4465-af92-fc762411922e/copd-action-plan.pdf.pdf</p> <p>The COPD Assessment Test (CAT) is an important tool for monitoring COPD progression or response to treatment over time. Record the patient's CAT score at each COPD visit. A decrease or increase of 2 or greater in a patient's CAT score suggests either improvement or disease progression with treatment, respectively.⁵ www.catestonline.org/content/dam/global/catestonline/questionnaires/English_CAT_combined.pdf</p> <p>Patients who have advanced COPD and other end-stage disease conditions are often better supported when their care is more tailored to quality-of-life goals. The IPCRG series of Desktop Helper information sheets includes Palliative Care for People With COPD, which summarizes the role of palliative care in COPD management. www.ipcr.org/dthpallcarecopd</p> <p>The AAFP's The EveryONE Project™ offers a Social Needs Screening Tool to help you screen for nonmedical needs in key areas (e.g., housing, food, transportation) so that you can connect your patients with community resources. Use this tool at regular COPD visits to ensure your patients' social needs are being addressed. www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/patient-care/everyone_project/hops19-physician-form-sdoh.pdf</p>	<p>The COPD Foundation's free COPD Pocket Consultant Guide (PCG) mobile app includes many patient resources, including an interactive COPD Action Plan that patients can bring to their office visits. The plan includes patient-completed sections on basic health data and a regular symptom assessment that displays on a tracking calendar as green, yellow, or red days over time. It also has a section the patient can fill out to capture questions they want to ask at their next visit. The COPD Action Plan can also be downloaded and printed from the COPD Foundation's website.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online: www.copdfoundation.org/Praxis/Resource-Repository/Search/Article/404/My-COPD-Action-Plan.aspx • Mobile app: www.copdfoundation.org/Learn-More/The-COPD-Pocket-Consultant-Guide/Patient-Caregiver-Track.aspx <p>The American Lung Association offers a COPD Action Plan that can be downloaded and printed. The patient and physician can complete the plan together to support self-management, and it can be updated as needed. The COPD Action Plan also provides specific information about when a patient should call 911 or seek immediate medical care. www.lung.org/getmedia/c7657648-a30f-4465-af92-fc762411922e/copd-action-plan.pdf.pdf</p> <p>National Jewish Health's series of patient education booklets includes Understanding Being Close, which discusses intimacy for people living with COPD. This is an often overlooked concern for patients and their partners. https://www.nationaljewish.org/NJH/media/pdf/pdf-Understanding-BeingClose.pdf</p>

References

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Links to external websites and guidelines are provided as a courtesy. They are neither a guarantee nor an endorsement by the AAFP of the guidelines, products, or services offered on these websites.