

COPD Management

When to carry on and when to seek care¹



Safe Zone | Carry On

You're in the safe zone if:

- Your cough has not gotten worse.
- Your medication is working as expected.
- You are breathing at a normal rate.

The safe zone means you are in control, and no action is needed.

Warning Zone | Take Action and Adjust

You're in the warning zone if:

- Your cough is worse than usual.
- You have more mucus build-up than usual and/or your mucus looks yellow, green, or gray.
- You are using your rescue inhaler or neutralizer more frequently.
- You have difficulty breathing while doing normal activities such as walking, talking, eating, bathing, or dressing.
- You feel tired or restless.
- You need more oxygen.
- You need more pillows, or you have to sit up to sleep.
- You have a fever of 100.4 or higher.

The warning zone means you need to act today. Contact a medical provider within 24 hours.

Remember: If you are in the warning zone, call your doctor. Do not wait until you need emergency care to seek help.

Medical Alert Zone | Seek Emergency Care

You're in the medical alert zone if:

- Your rescue medications aren't working.
- You have more difficulty breathing when resting.
- You feel confused or sleepy.
- Your lips and/or your nails are turning gray or blue.

The medical alert zone means you should take action now. Go to the emergency room or call 911.

¹ <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/copd/living-with-copd/copd-management-tools>