

## **CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD) INFORMATION SHEET**

**Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is the name for a collection of lung diseases including chronic bronchitis, emphysema and chronic obstructive airways disease.** People with COPD have difficulties breathing, primarily due to the narrowing of their airways. This is called airflow obstruction. Typical symptoms of COPD include:

- Increasing breathlessness when active
- A persistent cough with phlegm
- Frequent chest infections

### **Why should I attend my COPD review?**

There is no cure for COPD, although treatment can slow the progression of the disease and reduce the symptoms. Your review is an opportunity to discuss your symptoms and any lifestyle or medication changes that could improve them for you. There are many different treatments available for COPD including pulmonary rehabilitation, where education and graduated exercise has been shown to improve patient's well-being. The nurse can also advise you as to warning signs to look out for, and when to start emergency medications if appropriate.

The appointment is an opportunity to raise any questions or concerns you have about your health and medication.

### **What will happen at my appointment?**

The nurse will discuss your condition with you and ask specific questions to find out if you are having any problems. She will ask about your lifestyle and your medication and perform spirometry (see attached) to check if there has been a measurable progression of the disease. She will then be able to advise you about any changes she would recommend. If needed, she will refer you to a doctor for further review.

### **What lifestyle changes will help me?**

- Stopping smoking – this is the single most important change you can make to try and slow the progression of your disease. It will also reduce your chances of developing other disease such as heart disease, stroke and cancer.  
You can get help and support from 0800 052 5855 and [www.smokefree.nhs.uk](http://www.smokefree.nhs.uk)
- Increasing your regular exercise if needed. Advice can be obtained from [www.prescription4exercise.com](http://www.prescription4exercise.com)
- Weight loss if your BMI is greater than 25

### **What medication may help me?**

- There are various short and long acting inhalers that can open up the airways and help to reduce inflammation. Combination inhalers are also available.
- Oral tablets may help with mucous production
- If symptoms are severe oral steroids and/or oxygen may be prescribed