

Focus on life. Focus on health. *Stay focused.*

## Achieve Your Best Health

*Health Coaching for Chronic Obstructive  
Pulmonary Disease (COPD)*



**Blue** Option<sup>SM</sup>

BlueChoice HealthPlan of South Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.



## What is health coaching?

Health coaching is a voluntary program for members diagnosed with certain health conditions. We take a personalized and tailored approach that helps you manage your condition and cope with everyday issues so you can meet your health goals.

You'll have a personal coach to support, guide and help you learn what motivates you to make healthy lifestyle changes at your own pace. Your coach can:

- Help identify barriers to reaching and maintaining your health goals.
- Personalize your plan for better health.
- Help you find a physician if you don't have one.
- Help you get the most out of your health benefits.

## Is health coaching for me?

Health coaching is especially helpful to members who:

- Want to know more about managing their health condition(s).
- Make frequent emergency room visits.
- Use multiple medications for their health condition(s).
- Experience frequent hospitalizations.

## Your personal health coach

Your coach will work with you to establish goals for your health, then help you work toward achieving your goals. Each health coach is a health care professional with extensive training and knowledge. Your personal coach is a partner who can guide and support you to make positive lifestyle changes to better manage your health.

## We are here for you

We know it's not always easy to make a lifestyle change and stick to it. Our health coaches will ensure you have the information and tools to make the transition to a healthier lifestyle. We also understand that managing a health condition can be complicated. You can feel confident knowing your coach is there to support you each step of the way. Also, your personal information is safe. Your health coach is a professional who respects your privacy and will keep the details of your action plan confidential.

Our health coaches care about you and want to help you reach your health goals. Your coach can provide the encouragement, support and education you need. He or she can help you identify the barriers that keep you from reaching your health goals, adopt healthy habits that fit your lifestyle and connect you with other helpful resources.

As you take steps to manage your health, you may face challenges. But you can overcome them with the help of your friends, family and our health coaching team!

# What do you need to know about COPD?

COPD is a lung condition that can make it hard to breathe. Those living with COPD have chronic bronchitis, emphysema or both. When your usual respiratory symptoms suddenly get worse, this is known as a flare-up or an exacerbation.

**Chronic bronchitis** involves swelling of the airways and production of extra mucus resulting in a constant cough. It may feel like you have a cough or cold that won't go away.

**Emphysema** causes narrowed airways and damaged air sacs. It can be difficult to fully inhale and exhale, which can make you feel short of breath easily.

## Signs and Symptoms

These can vary from person to person, but the most common symptoms include:

- Persistent coughing, sometimes called "smoker's cough"
- Shortness of breath while doing daily activities
- Excess mucus production
- Wheezing or feeling like you can't breathe
- Not being able to take a deep breath
- Frequent lung infections
- Fatigue

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## What can you do to help manage your symptoms?

**Know your triggers.** There are many common things that can cause a COPD exacerbation. To help identify your triggers, keep a journal describing your symptoms, what you were doing at the time, what smells you were exposed to and how you were feeling emotionally. Common triggers include:

- Smoking or secondhand smoke
- Infections, such as colds or flu
- Strong fumes, like car exhaust or perfume
- Air pollution and smog
- Weather changes
- Very cold or humid air
- Stress and anxiety

Once you identify your triggers, you can take steps to avoid them. Remember to have your rescue medicine with you at all times for the triggers you can't avoid.

**Quit smoking or don't start.** Smoking affects your lungs in a big way and quitting is the most important thing you can do for COPD. By quitting, you can significantly improve your lung health and lower your risk for complications. Your health coach can help you create a quit plan that's right for you.

**Manage your weight.** Reaching and maintaining a healthy weight is especially important if you have COPD. People at a healthy weight may have fewer COPD symptoms and complications. Being overweight makes your heart and lungs work harder. As a result, breathing is more difficult, making you feel tired and weak.

**Eat smart.** A healthy diet is important when you have COPD. Healthy meals and snacks give you energy and improve the fitness of your lungs. A healthy diet can also help you fight infection. The key is to eat balanced, nutritious meals that are rich in whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean protein.

# Don't neglect your emotional health

## Manage stress

Individuals with certain health conditions may be more likely to feel down or depressed, and stress can make any of us feel worse. Take time for yourself, identify ways to minimize your stress and talk to your doctor if you have feelings of depression or anxiety. Here are some tips:

**Exercise.** Even moderate exercise can help reduce stress and relieve depression.

**Relaxation and breathing exercises.** Relaxation exercises, such as yoga, are proven to help relieve stress.

**Relax and communicate.** When you feel tired, take a break. And when you feel stressed, talk it out. Sharing your thoughts with others can help.

**Think positively.** Be mindful of your “self talk” — the mental images you create for yourself.

**Don't depend on alcohol, tobacco or other drugs to cope with stress.** If you think you may be dependent on any of these substances, contact your doctor right away for help.



“I am so glad we have a program available to us and that I can call with any questions. I think I am doing a good job, but it is nice to know that I can call when I need to.”

– Health coaching participant

## Tackle the blues

When you have a health condition, you may be more likely to feel down or depressed. Depression is common, but treatable. To see if you may need additional support, look over these statements and think about how you've felt in the last two weeks. Check if you have:

- Felt sad or down.
- Not cared about things you liked before.
- Been eating more or less than usual.
- Felt tired.
- Felt anxious.
- Not been able to think or make up your mind.
- Felt like you are not worth much.
- Been sleeping more or less than usual.
- Thought about dying or killing yourself.

If you checked five or more, talk to your health care provider or your health coach about whether you might be depressed. If you are, it's important to get help so you can get back to enjoying life.

# Your relationship with your health care team is important

The best thing for preventing complications with COPD is to develop a good relationship with your health care team, which may include your primary care physician, a respiratory therapist, a health coach and others. Keeping open communication with your health care team is important and helps you play an active role in your care.

## During your visit

Questions for your health care team may include:

- What are the three most important things we can do to manage my COPD?
- What can I do to keep my COPD from getting worse?
- What techniques have other patients found helpful in quitting smoking?
- Are there any side effects of my medications?
- Should I make any changes to my diet or lifestyle?
- What exercises can I do to stay strong even when I am easily exhausted?
- When should I come back for a follow-up appointment?







## Follow a treatment plan

**Take your medications as prescribed.** This is especially important for your controller medications. These medicines can prevent symptoms before they start and decrease the need for rescue medicines. Most controller medications should be used once daily or twice daily. The damage to your airways and lungs is permanent, but using medications properly can keep your symptoms in check and decrease infections and flare-ups.

**Ask your doctor about spirometry testing.** This simple test measures your lung function, shows how severe your COPD is and tells your doctor how well your treatment plan is working. The Global Initiative for COPD recommends a spirometry test at least once a year to detect and treat declining lung function. The Global Initiative for COPD is an independent organization that provides health information on behalf of your health plan.

# Participant's Bill of Rights

Health coaches respect the wishes of participants and their family members and recognize that participants have RIGHTS and RESPONSIBILITIES, including the:

- Right to know the philosophy and characteristics of the health coaching program.
- Right to have personally identifiable health information shared by the health coaching program only in accordance with state and federal law.
- Right to identify a staff member and his or her job title, and to speak with a supervisor of a staff member, if requested.
- Right to receive accurate information from the health coaching program.
- Right to receive administrative information about changes in or termination of the health coaching program.
- Right to decline participation, revoke consent or disenroll at any time.
- Responsibility to submit any forms necessary to participate in the program, to the extent the law requires.
- Responsibility to give accurate clinical and contact information, and to notify the health coaching program of changes in this information.
- Responsibility to notify their treating providers of their participation in the health coaching program, if applicable.
- Understand when disease management information will be disclosed to third parties.

Health coaches inform members of these rights and uphold them at all times during the program. All members receive a written copy of these rights and responsibilities within 30 days of program enrollment.

**“Thank you for being there for me. The combination of having you and my doctor has really turned my life around.”**

**– Health coaching participant**

# You make the choice

*Health coaching is completely voluntary and free.*

Your decision to participate will not affect your health benefits in any way. If you decide that having a personal health coach is not for you, you can opt out of the program at any time by calling 855-838-5897. If you have a problem or complaint during your health coaching experience, you can call 855-838-5897 and ask to speak to the program manager. In an emergency, please contact your doctor or call 911.

## Additional resources

These resources can provide additional information about living well with COPD. These are independent organizations that provide health information you may find helpful.

American Lung Association

[www.LungUSA.org](http://www.LungUSA.org)

National Heart, Lung and

Blood Institute

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

Global Initiative for Chronic

Obstructive Pulmonary Lung Disease

[www.GoldCOPD.com](http://www.GoldCOPD.com)

The National Emphysema Foundation

[www.EmphysemaFoundation.org](http://www.EmphysemaFoundation.org)

National Lung Health

Education Program

[www.nlhep.org](http://www.nlhep.org)


American Association for

Respiratory Care

[www.YourLungHealth.org](http://www.YourLungHealth.org)

These links lead to third party websites. Those companies are solely responsible for the contents and privacy policies on their sites.

The information contained in this brochure is for educational purposes only. It does not represent a standard of care. Your physician must determine the appropriateness of the information in light of all your circumstances. It is important to discuss options with your physician when deciding on the best treatment for you.



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[BlueOptionSC.com](http://BlueOptionSC.com)

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