

COPD toolkit

Three simple steps to help people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) stay well this winter

29/10/25 V2

The North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) has developed the following '**Breathe easier' this winter toolkit** to support people living with COPD to stay well this winter with three simple steps.

COPD is a long-term lung condition that makes breathing difficult and is one of the leading causes of death worldwide.

Winter can be a particularly challenging time for people living with COPD. Cold air, seasonal infections, and changes to daily routines can make symptoms worse and increase the risk of serious complications.

COPD also puts significant pressure on the NHS, particularly during the colder months.



The following toolkit has been created to support patients with COPD look after their lungs and stay well through winter. It includes information and resources for COPD patients encouraging them to:

- **Stop smoking**
- **Get their winter vaccines** (Flu, RSV, Pneumococcal and COVID-19 if eligible)
- **Use inhalers correctly**

The toolkit is designed for easy sharing across all communication channels to help patients stay informed and supported this winter. **You can download the online toolkit here:** www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/breathe-easier-copd/

Campaign aims and objectives

- Raise awareness among patients with COPD about the additional risks in winter to their lung health, particularly from smoking, seasonal viruses and not using inhalers correctly.
- Promote flu/RSV and COVID-19 vaccination uptake among eligible patient groups
- Promote stopping smoking
- Promote the correct use of inhalers
- Encourage patients to attend an annual COPD review
- Share resources with GPs and COPD nurses to support patients with COPD in managing their respiratory health during the colder months

Key messages

- **Stop smoking:** If you have COPD, smoking further damages your lungs, speeds up breathing problems, and makes your medications less effective.
- **Get vaccinated against flu/RSV/COVID-19 (if eligible):** Cold air weakens your immune system, making it harder to fight respiratory infections, protect yourself against flu/RSV COVID-19 (if eligible) this winter. Speak to your GP, COPD nurse, or community pharmacist about getting your winter vaccinations.
- **Use your inhalers the right way, everyday** - Using your inhalers correctly every day helps keep your airways open, control your symptoms, and prevent flare-ups

Toolkit content – download here www.northeastnorthcumbria.nhs.uk/toolkits/breathe-easier-copd/

Social media messaging and visuals

- Copy for websites/ newsletters/bulletins
- Printable posters
- Digital screen saver
- Press release

Social media - Please tag us in your social media posts

Use **#BreatheEasier** **#HereToHelp**

Facebook - NorthEastandNorthCumbriaNHS

X – @NENC_NHS

Instagram – nenc_nhs

TikTok - @nenc_icb

Linked-In - @north-east-and-north-cumbria-nhs

YouTube - North East and North Cumbria NHS

Breathe easier	
General Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD. ❄️ Breathe easier this winter - with three simple steps 🚫 Stop smoking – smoking damages your lungs, speeds up breathing problems, and makes your medication less effective. 💉 Get your winter vaccinations – Cold air can weaken your immune system, protect yourself from flu, RSV, and COVID-19 (if eligible). 👉 Use your inhalers the right way, every day – helping keep airways open, control symptoms and prevent flare-ups. Find out more at 👉 NHS COPD #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	

Smoking	❄️ Breathe easier this winter! Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD. 🚫 Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to: • Help you breathe more easily • Reduce coughing and flare-ups You can get free help and advice on stopping smoking from your GP or local pharmacy. Find out more at 👉 NHS stop smoking #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	The advertisement features a man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a light grey winter jacket, looking upwards with a slight smile. The background is a soft blue with white snowflakes. The text 'breathe easier this winter...' is written in a large, blue, sans-serif font. Below it, in a smaller blue font, is 'Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD.' Further down, in an even smaller blue font, is 'Stopping smoking is the best thing you can do to help protect your lungs.' The NHS logo is in the top right corner, and a 'HERE TO HELP' graphic is in the bottom right corner.
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Vaccinations	❄️ Breathe easier this winter! Winter viruses like flu, COVID-19 and RSV can make COPD symptoms worse, but vaccines can offer protection. If you have COPD ask your GP or pharmacist about your free winter vaccines, including: 💉 Flu (over 65s, high risk, carers, pregnant, close contacts of immunosuppressed) 💉 COVID-19 (over 75s and immunosuppressed) 💉 Pneumococcal (over 65s) 💉 RSV (over 75s or more than 28 weeks pregnant) Find out more at 🖱️ NHS Winter Vaccines #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	
Inhalers	❄️ Breathe easier this winter! Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD. Make sure you use your inhalers the right way – every day, to help keep your airways open, control symptoms and prevent flare-ups! • Use them every day, even when you feel well • Keep a spare inhaler and don't run out of medicine	

	If you're not sure how to use your inhaler, ask your pharmacist to show you how. Or select your inhaler from the list and find step-by-step guidance at 🖱️ RightBreathe #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	
Checklist	❄️ Breathe easier this winter! Cold weather can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD, but there are some simple ways to help you breathe easier this winter: Your COPD winter checklist ✓ Have you had your winter vaccines? ✓ Have you checked how you use your inhaler? ✓ Do you have enough inhalers and medicines at home? ✓ Do you know what to do if your symptoms get worse? ✓ Have you stopped smoking or asked for help to quit? ✓ Do you have a plan if you start to feel unwell? ✓ Have you had an annual COPD review? Talk to your COPD nurse or GP about more ways to stay healthy this winter. Find out more at 🖱️ NHS COPD #BreatheEasierThisWinter #HereToHelp	 The graphic is a blue-themed poster with white snowflakes. It features the NHS logo in the top right corner. The main text 'breathe easier this winter...' is in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below this, a white arrow points to the right, containing the text 'Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you have COPD.' and 'Breathe easier and stay well with some simple lung care steps.' To the right of the arrow, there is a vertical stack of three white arrows pointing right, labeled 'HERE', 'TO', and 'HELP' in blue text.

Web update/newsletter copy

Breathe easier this winter

Winter can be tough on your lungs, especially if you're living with COPD. Cold air, viruses and infections can make breathing harder and increase the risk of flare-ups.

Breathe easier this winter with three simple steps to keep you well and out of hospital.

1. Stop smoking

If you have COPD, quitting smoking is the best thing you can do for your lungs.

It helps you breathe more easily, reduces coughing, and cuts the risk of flare-ups.

Free NHS support is available. Ask your GP, nurse, or pharmacist for advice, or visit [NHS Stop Smoking](#).

2. Get your winter vaccines

Winter viruses like flu, RSV and COVID-19 can make COPD symptoms worse. Protect yourself by getting vaccinated.

Ask your GP practice or local pharmacist about free winter vaccines (if eligible) including:

- Flu
- COVID-19
- Pneumococcal
- RSV

Visit [NHS Winter Vaccines](#) to find out more.

3. Use your inhalers correctly

Using your inhalers the right way, every day, helps keep your airways open and symptoms under control.

- Use them even when you feel well
- Keep a spare inhaler at home
- If you're unsure about your technique, ask your GP, nurse or pharmacist to show you

For more advice select your inhaler from the list and find step-by-step guidance at [RightBreathe](#) .

Your annual COPD review

Your GP practice may invite you for an annual COPD review. This is your chance to:

- Check your medication and inhaler technique
- Talk about your symptoms and what to do if they get worse
- Get support to stop smoking
- Make sure you're up to date with your vaccines

A short chat can make a big difference to your health.

Your COPD winter checklist

- ✓ Have you had your winter vaccines?
- ✓ Checked your inhaler technique?
- ✓ Got enough inhalers and medicines at home?
- ✓ Stopped smoking or asked for help to quit?
- ✓ Know what to do if your symptoms get worse?
- ✓ Attended your annual COPD review?

Speak to your GP or COPD nurse for more ways to stay healthy this winter.

Additional assets

Posters



Digital Screen
Saver



Press release

NHS urges people to take three simple steps to breathe easier this winter

The NHS is encouraging people living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) to take three simple steps to help protect their lungs and stay well this winter.

More than 130,000 people across the region live with COPD - a serious lung disease which makes it harder to breathe.

It includes illness such as emphysema and chronic bronchitis which can cause permanent damage to the lungs and airways. People with COPD often have a long-lasting cough, feel short of breath, wheeze and get tired easily - which can all be worse during the cold winter months.

Dr Catherine Monaghan, a leading respiratory consultant and medical director for NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB), said: "Winter can be tough on your lungs especially when you have COPD.

"Cold air and winter viruses can make breathing much more difficult, but taking just three simple steps to protect your lungs could help you breathe easier, manage your symptoms, and avoid any unnecessary trips to hospital."

People living with COPD are being encouraged to:

- Stop smoking
- Get their winter vaccinations
- Use their inhalers the right way, every day

"Stopping smoking is one of the best things you can do for your health," added Dr Monaghan.

"Smoking damages your lungs, makes breathing more difficult, and can reduce how well your medicines work. You can talk to your GP or COPD nurse about free support available to help you quit.

"It's also important to get your flu, RSV, and COVID-19 vaccines, if you're eligible. Cold weather can weaken your immune system and make it harder to fight winter viruses and using your inhalers, in the right way every day, helps to keep your airways open, control your symptoms, and prevent COPD flare-ups.

"Taking these three simple steps now will help you breathe easier and stay well in the colder months ahead.

"If you need further advice or support, to help manage COPD symptoms, speak to your GP or COPD nurse for more ways to keep your lungs healthy this winter."

Ends.