

Fresh Air News

Issue 1, 2021

COPD Flare-Ups

If you are living with COPD, especially if you have chronic bronchitis, you may sometimes have sudden attacks where your breathing and coughing symptoms quickly get worse and stay that way. These attacks are called COPD exacerbations, or flare-ups.

With treatment, many people recover and return to the same level of shortness of breath they had before the attack. COPD attacks can happen more often, last longer, and are more severe the longer you have COPD.

What causes a flare-up?

The two most common causes of a COPD attack are:

- Respiratory tract infections, such as acute bronchitis or pneumonia
- Air pollution

Having other health problems, such as heart failure or an abnormal heartbeat (arrhythmia) may also trigger a flare-up. In some cases, the cause is not known.

Here's what happens during an attack:

- Your lungs may suddenly produce more mucus, or the airways of your lungs may suddenly get narrower
- These two things reduce the airflow in your lungs
- Reduced airflow in your lungs makes it harder to breathe and makes your coughing worse

Continued next page.

Contact Us

1-866-942-7966
Monday–Friday,
8:30 am–5:00 pm
TTY: 1-800-662-1220

We Value Your Opinion

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at [mvplistsens.com](https://www.mvplistsens.com).

All responses are 100% confidential and help create a better experience.

MVP Health Care offers a health management program for members living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on the Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management, and Prevention of COPD, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD). This program must be coordinated with your physician.



If you have a flare-up, don't panic. Being prepared will help you keep it under control. Take your medications as prescribed by your doctor. If you feel like you are suffocating or are having chest pain, **call 911.**

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Symptoms

In a COPD attack, your usual symptoms suddenly get worse:

- Shortness of breath and wheezing
- Coughing, with or without mucus
- You may cough up more mucus than usual, and it may be a different color

Some people also have a fever, insomnia, fatigue, depression, or confusion.

Treatment

Treatment of a COPD attack depends on how bad it is. Your doctor will work with you on a treatment plan. It may involve several visits to your doctor's office or clinic. Or you may need to be treated in the hospital.

Your treatment may include:

- Quick relief (short-acting), inhaled bronchodilators, which are medicines that relax your lung airways and make it easier to breathe
- Oral corticosteroid medicines, which lower the swelling in your airways and may make breathing easier
- Ventilation devices, which are machines that help you breathe better or breathe for you
- Oxygen, to increase the amount of oxygen in your blood
- Fluids for dehydration
- Antibiotics

Chronic Illness and Mental Health

Living with a chronic illness, like COPD, may make you more likely to develop a mental health condition, such as depression. A new or ongoing diagnosis combined with a change to your routine and managing your treatment plan might be stressful or make you sad sometimes. However, if those feelings do not go away and impact your daily life, you may have depression. Some things to look out for:

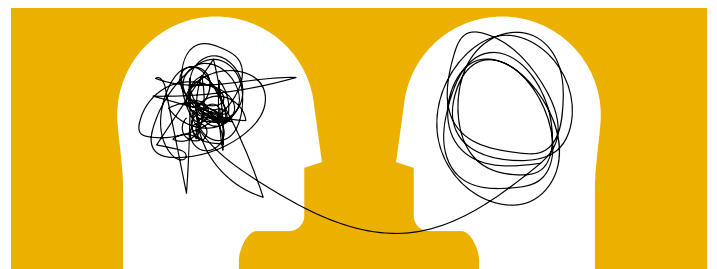
- Constant feelings of hopelessness, irritability, or sadness
- No longer enjoying things that you used to enjoy
- Loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, changes in weight

The good news is that depression is treatable when you are living with a chronic illness.

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

Talk with your doctor if you think you are depressed. Make sure your doctor knows about your current treatment plan and medications that you take for COPD.

You may also contact an MVP Case Manager at **1-866-942-7966** to discuss your condition and help prepare you to speak with your doctor.



Go online and **take charge of your health.**

The MVP Healthwise® Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com and select *Members*, then *Health & Wellness*.

The Right Care. **Right Away.**

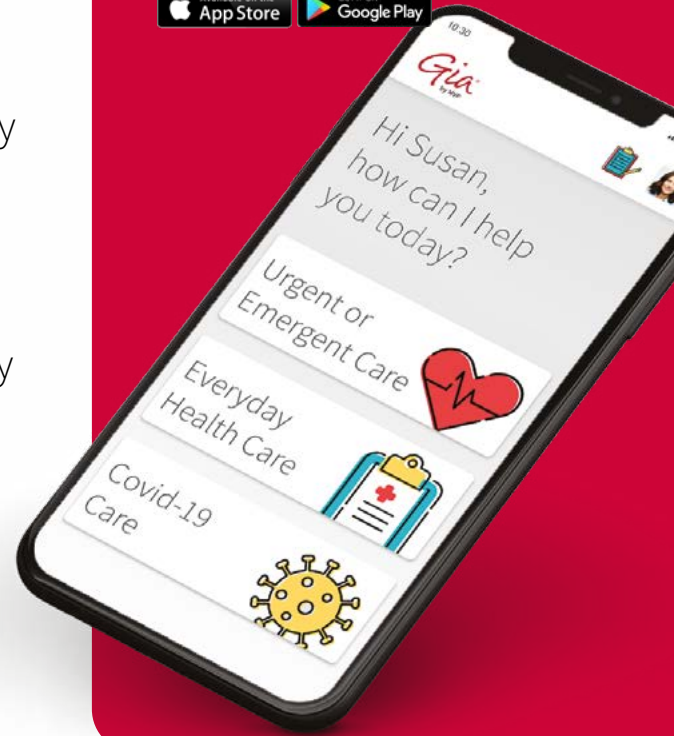
Start with GiaSM

Access online 24/7 urgent and emergency care services anytime, anywhere. Plus, Gia is your ultimate health care connection for everyday health needs such as screenings and tests, prescription refills, or help on any health care topic.

When you don't know what care you need, start with Gia! Gia can refer you to any of MVP's telemedicine services or, when necessary, in-person care from nearby doctors, specialists, labs, pharmacies, and more!

Telemedicine services from MVP Health Care are provided by UCM Digital Health, Amwell, and Physera at no cost-share for members. (Plan exceptions may apply.) Members' direct or digital provider visits may be subject to co-pay/cost-share per plan.

Download the **Gia by MVP** app and get started today!



Quick Tips for **Your Next Appointment**

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Whether your appointment is in-person or virtual, here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down your questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get asked and answered
- Bring a "health history" list with you and keep it up to date
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)

Find more information and printable forms at mvphealthcare.com



LivingWell



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625 State Street
Schenectady, NY 12305-2111
mvphealthcare.com

Are you due for important health screenings?

Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit mvphealthcare.com/PreventiveCare and talk to your doctor.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.

Living Well Programs from MVP

MVP offers a variety of classes and workshops—both in-person and virtual—to help you live well physically, emotionally, and otherwise! Find classes like chair moves, tai chi, meditation, or even quitting tobacco. To find a class that is right for you, visit mvphealthcare.com/healthandwellness and select *View the Living Well Program Calendar*.

