

## Prescribing tip for information

### COPD Rescue Therapy Pathway - Update

Effective self-management of COPD is associated with a reduction in hospitalisation.<sup>1</sup>

To achieve effective self-management patients should have an individualised self-management plan which includes,

- Education about COPD and how to manage it as set out in [NICE NG115: Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in over 16s: diagnosis and management](#)
- Regular reviews of their plan at all future appointments
- Individualised advice explaining what action to take in the event of an exacerbation
- Be offered a supply of rescue therapy (containing oral steroids and antibiotics) to keep at home if they meet the eligible criteria.

#### Criteria for offering Rescue Therapy

- Patient has had an exacerbation within the last year, and remains at risk of exacerbations
- Patient understands and are confident about when and how to take these medicines, and the associated benefits and harms
- Patient knows to tell their healthcare professional when they have used the medicines, and to ask for replacements.

NICE NG115

The COPD Rescue Therapy Pathway for Central Lancashire has been updated to reflect the NICE guidance and antibiotic recommendations. The pathway is designed to support practices to identify suitable patients, prescribe, educate and review rescue therapy supplies.

Included within this pathway are three updated Patient Information Leaflets.

The patient information leaflets are for each of the antibiotic / steroid combination recommended:

- Amoxicillin & Prednisolone
- Doxycycline & Prednisolone
- Clarithromycin & Prednisolone

**Please use these leaflets to assist with patient education and ensure patients have accurate instructions at home.**

The COPD Rescue Therapy Pathway is available to access on the [Medicines Optimisation Team Sharepoint](#) under the Resources tab.

**Additionally, the pathway and all three patient information leaflets have been added to this document.**

To contact the Medicines Optimisation Team please phone 01772 214302

If you have any suggestions for future topics to cover in our prescribing tips, please contact [Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net](mailto:Nicola.schaffel@nhs.net)

1. [Primary Care Respiratory Society, Get Winter Wrapped. The appropriate use of Rescue Packs.](#)

## COPD rescue therapy pathway (based on NICE guidance NG115)

Patient has a diagnosis of COPD (including emphysema or chronic bronchitis).  
(NB Treatment of patients with a diagnosis of bronchiectasis would follow an alternative pathway)

**Patient motivated and requesting to manage their own exacerbations.**

Patient meets the criteria for inclusion (as per [NICE COPD guidelines NG115](#))

- Patient has had one exacerbation of COPD in last year
- Patient is at risk of further exacerbations

A decision is made between healthcare professional and patient regarding their suitability for rescue packs.

Patients / carers are **educated** to identify symptoms of flare up, management of flare ups and use of rescue packs.

Offer short course of corticosteroid (prednisolone 30mg od for 5 days) and antibiotics (as per NICE guidance) for patients to keep at home.

[guide-to-resources-pdf-6602624893 \(nice.org.uk\)](#)

- Consider patient allergies
- Prescribe as an acute item.
- Code each issue of a rescue pack using 8BMW (read code) and record issue in clinical record.

Educate patient when to seek further help if symptoms not responding to rescue medication.

**Provide patient with appropriate patient information leaflet.**

**See below**

Instruct patient to tell a health care professional when the supply of medication has been used and to ask for a replacement.

Discuss the use of corticosteroids and antibiotics with patients who keep these medicines at home at **ALL review appointments.**

Check they still understand how to use this medication appropriately and re-educate where necessary.

Patient has used 3 or more courses of rescue medication in the last year.

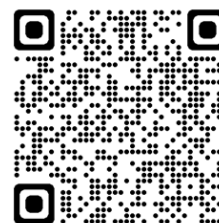
Patient asked to attend for further review.

## COPD Rescue Pack – Patient information leaflet

### Amoxicillin & Prednisolone

This leaflet has been given to you to help answer any questions you may have about your COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) Rescue Pack. **Please read this leaflet and keep it in a safe place with your COPD Rescue Pack medication.** If you have any further questions, please contact your GP, practice nurse or the COPD team.

Additional information is available from the British Lung Foundation  
<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/flare-ups>



#### What is my COPD Rescue Pack?

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains a supply of standby medications to start if your COPD deteriorates before you can see your GP.

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains two different medications:

- Steroid tablets: Prednisolone 5mg tablets
- Antibiotic capsules: Amoxicillin 500mg capsules

**PLEASE NOTE:** Amoxicillin is a type of penicillin, if you are allergic to penicillin or amoxicillin, do **not** take this medication, instead inform your GP practice or pharmacist immediately.

#### When should I take my COPD Rescue Pack?

- Only start your Rescue Pack medication if you are having a flare-up of your COPD.
- If you spot a flare up and get treatment started early you can get better more quickly and avoid emergency trips to the hospital.
- This pack has been prescribed for flare ups of your COPD, **not for any other medical condition or by any other person.**
- **Do not use the Rescue Pack if it has passed its expiry date, instead contact your GP urgently to obtain a new supply.**

You should have a COPD management plan detailing the steps you should take in the event of a flare-up of your COPD. **If you do not have a current management plan, contact your GP practice or COPD team.**

Your COPD may be getting worse if you have **ONE** of these symptoms

- Increased breathlessness
- New or increased wheeze and /or chest tightness
- Change in sputum (phlegm) colour or quantity
- Cough – new or increased.

If you have **ONE** of these symptoms

- Increase your reliever (blue) inhaler medication
- Continue with your other inhalers as normal
- Rest and keep indoors
- Check your COPD management plan for further advice.

## How do I take my COPD rescue pack?

If you have **TWO OR MORE** symptoms for over 24 hours, despite using more of your reliever (blue) inhaler, start your rescue pack as follows.

- **Prednisolone 30mg (6 x 5mg tablets) once a day for 5 days (it is best to take this in the morning but it might not be possible on the first day. It is okay to take these at any time of the day on the first day).**

Check the amount or colour of your sputum. If your sputum changes or becomes a yellow or green colour, start your antibiotic

- **Amoxicillin 500mg three times a day for 5 days.**

## What should I do if I have forgotten to take a dose?

**It is important to take medication as it is prescribed**

However, if you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then carry on taking your next dose at its regular time. If you realise that you have missed a dose, but it is almost time for your next dose, **do not take a double dose**, skip the dose you have missed, take the next dose at its regular time and then carry on as normal with any remaining doses.

## Are there any side effects?

All medications may cause side effects. With short courses such as your COPD Rescue Pack, most people don't have any problems

The patient information leaflets supplied with each medication within your Rescue Pack list the more common side effects and other precautions. **Please read these leaflets.**

## What else should I do?

If despite taking the rescue pack your symptoms **continue to deteriorate or do not start to improve within 72 hours** contact your GP practice or the COPD team as soon as possible for further advice. **If you have sudden severe breathing difficulties or chest pain call 999 for an ambulance.**

## How to obtain further supplies

Contact your GP practice **as soon as** you use your COPD rescue pack so that you can obtain a replacement.

## How to store your COPD Rescue Pack?

Store your COPD Rescue Pack in a safe place at home that is easily within reach to you, but out of the reach of children.

## COPD Rescue Pack – Patient information leaflet

### Clarithromycin & Prednisolone

This leaflet has been given to you to help answer any questions you may have about your COPD Rescue Pack. **Please read this leaflet and keep it in a safe place with your COPD Rescue Pack medication.** If you have any further questions, please contact your GP, practice nurse or the COPD team.

Additional information is available from the British Lung Foundation  
<https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/copd/flare-ups>



#### What is my COPD Rescue Pack?

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains a supply of standby medications to start if your COPD deteriorates before you can see your GP.

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains two different medications:

- Steroid tablets: Prednisolone 5mg tablets
- Antibiotic tablets: Clarithromycin 500mg tablets

#### When should I take my COPD Rescue Pack?

- Only start your Rescue Pack medication if you are having a flare-up of your COPD.
- If you spot a flare up and get treatment started early you can get better more quickly and avoid emergency trips to the hospital.
- This pack has been prescribed for flare ups of your COPD, **not for any other medical condition or by any other person.**
- **Do not use the Rescue Pack if it has passed its expiry date, instead contact your GP urgently to obtain a new supply.**

You should have a COPD management plan detailing the steps you should take in the event of a flare-up of your COPD. **If you do not have a current management plan, contact your GP or COPD team.**

Your COPD may be getting worse if you have **ONE** of these symptoms

- Increased breathlessness
- New or increased wheeze and /or chest tightness
- Change in sputum (phlegm) colour or quantity
- Cough – new or increased.

If you have **ONE** of these symptoms

- Increase your reliever (blue) inhaler medication
- Continue with your other inhalers as normal
- Rest and keep indoors
- Check your COPD management plan for further advice.

## How do I take my COPD rescue pack?

If you have **TWO OR MORE** symptoms for over 24 hours, despite using more of your reliever inhaler (blue), start your rescue pack as follows.

- **Prednisolone 30mg (6 x 5mg tablets) once a day for 5 days (it is best to take this in the morning, but it might not be possible on the first day. It is okay to take these at any time of the day on the first day).**

Check the amount or colour of your sputum. If your sputum changes or becomes a yellow or green colour, start your antibiotic

- **Clarithromycin 500mg twice a day for 5 days.**

## What should I do if I have forgotten to take a dose?

**It is important to take medication as it is prescribed**

However, if you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then carry on taking your next dose at its regular time. If you realise that you have missed a dose, but it is almost time for your next dose, **do not take a double dose**, skip the dose you have missed, take the next dose at its regular time and then carry on as normal with any remaining doses.

## Are there any side effects?

All medications may cause side effects. With short courses such as your COPD Rescue Pack, most people don't have any problems

The patient information leaflets supplied with each medication within your Rescue Pack list the more common side effects and other precautions. **Please read these leaflets.**

## What else should I do?

If despite taking the rescue pack your symptoms **continue to deteriorate or do not start to improve within 72 hours** contact your GP practice or the COPD team as soon as possible for further advice. **If you have sudden severe breathing difficulties or chest pain call 999 for an ambulance.**

## How to obtain further supplies

Contact your GP practice **as soon as** you use your COPD rescue pack so that you can obtain a replacement.

## How to store your COPD Rescue Pack?

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## COPD Rescue Pack – Patient information leaflet

### Doxycycline & Prednisolone

This leaflet has been given to you to help answer any questions you may have about your COPD Rescue Pack. **Please read this leaflet and keep it in a safe place with your COPD Rescue Pack medication.** If you have any further questions, please contact your GP, practice nurse or the COPD team.

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#### What is my COPD Rescue Pack?

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains a supply of standby medications to start if your COPD deteriorates before you can see your GP.

Your COPD Rescue Pack contains two different medications:

- Steroid tablets: Prednisolone 5mg tablets
- Antibiotic capsules: Doxycycline 100mg capsules

#### When should I take my COPD Rescue Pack?

- Only start your Rescue Pack medication if you are having a flare-up of your COPD.
- If you spot a flare up and get treatment started early you can get better more quickly and avoid emergency trips to the hospital.
- This pack has been prescribed for flare ups of your COPD, **not for any other medical condition or by any other person.**
- **Do not use the Rescue Pack if it has passed its expiry date, instead contact your GP urgently to obtain a new supply.**

You should have a COPD management plan detailing the steps you should take in the event of a flare-up of your COPD. **If you do not have a current management plan, contact your GP or COPD team.**

Your COPD may be getting worse if you have **ONE** of these symptoms

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- Change in sputum (phlegm) colour or quantity
- Cough – new or increased.

If you have **ONE** of these symptoms

- Increase your reliever (blue) inhaler medication
- Continue with your other inhalers as normal
- Rest and keep indoors
- Check your COPD management plan for further advice.

## How do I take my COPD rescue pack?

If you have **TWO OR MORE** symptoms for over 24 hours, despite using more of your reliever inhaler (blue), start your rescue pack as follows.

- **Prednisolone 30mg (6 x 5mg tablets) once a day for 5 days (it is best to take this in the morning, but it might not be possible on the first day. It is okay to take these at any time of the day on the first day).**

Check the amount or colour of your sputum. If your sputum changes or becomes a yellow or green colour, start your antibiotic

- **Doxycycline two capsules (200mg) to be taken immediately followed by 100mg daily to complete a five day course.**

## What should I do if I have forgotten to take a dose?

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However, if you forget to take a dose, take it as soon as you remember and then carry on taking your next dose at its regular time. If you realise that you have missed a dose, but it is almost time for your next dose, **do not take a double dose**, skip the dose you have missed, take the next dose at its regular time and then carry on as normal with any remaining doses.

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