

Caregiver Assistance News

"Caring for You - Caring for Others"

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**

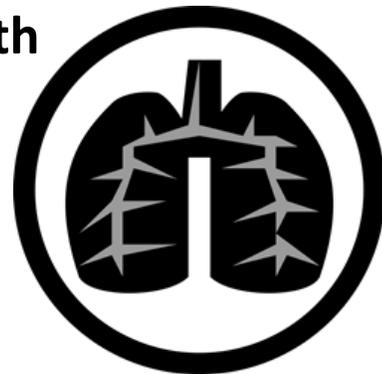


NOVEMBER 2017

Understanding Lung Disease - Shortness of Breath

When lung disease progresses to the point that the lungs can't supply enough oxygen to meet the needs of the body, the doctor may prescribe home oxygen therapy. The following symptoms and signs will show that oxygen may be needed:

- Excessive Sleepiness
- Morning Headaches
- Irritability
- Poor Concentration
- Worsening Shortness of Breath
- Swelling of the Feet, Ankles and Legs



Some people think that using oxygen will reduce their independence, or that they will become addicted to it; however, oxygen therapy can greatly improve energy levels, the ability to breathe, and overall quality of life. Using this therapy can add years to a person's life. The doctor will use various tests to find out when, and how much, oxygen is needed.

Oxygen comes in different kinds of containers and is given through prongs inserted into the nose, or through a tube inserted surgically directly into the throat. Traveling with a portable oxygen container is easy, but always be sure to take enough oxygen along for the outing. Tell the doctor when a trip is planned in case there are any special precautions.

NOTE - The doctor will prescribe a specific "flow rate" of oxygen, and you will need to make sure that not too much, or too little, is given. Different flow rates may be given for sleeping and when active. Care must also be taken to avoid having anything flammable in the room where the oxygen container is kept, such as a cigarette lighter or gas range.

Diaphragmatic Breathing

Diaphragmatic breathing, also known as belly breathing, helps a person to relax and get more air out of the lungs. This breathing technique is done by sitting in a

comfortable chair or lying down. One hand is put on the abdomen and one hand on the chest. As the person breathes in, have them notice how the abdominal muscles relax and then as they exhale, they should tighten the abdominal muscles to help push air out. The chest should not move. The exhalation (breathing out) should always



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take longer than the inhalation (breathing in). It is very important that the person does these exercises while calm and relaxed so that they will be able to get into the habit of breathing this way.

Rehabilitation

The main goals of rehabilitation for people with lung disease are to:

- Increase the ability to breathe
- Improve the quality and length of life
- Reduce the need for medication
- Lower stress and anxiety levels
- Learn about lung disease and how to manage symptoms
- Improve the ability to exercise and return to work, if possible

Quit Smoking!

The most important thing a person with lung disease can do is to STOP SMOKING. Smoking is the number one cause of COPD and can make any kind of lung disease worse. Medications are available that can help a person stop smoking (such as the “patch”). People who smoke and have lung disease need extra support and encouragement from family members, friends and caregivers so that they can stop!

Keeping the Airways Clear

People with COPD often have excess mucus in their lungs, which makes breathing more difficult. Devices such as the Acapella,[™] the Flutter Valve,[™] and the Vest may be recommended by the doctor. These handheld devices or the Vest help clear mucus from the lungs by creating a vibration in the airways. This keeps the airways open and moves mucus up and out.

Other ways to clear mucus from the lungs are:

- Diaphragmatic breathing and huff coughing
- Special positioning of the body to help drain mucus - called postural drainage or bronchial drainage. This uses gravity to drain mucus from the smaller to the larger airways where it can be coughed out more easily.
- Rhythmic clapping of the chest, back and ribs can be done while the person is positioned for airway clearance. Clapping or percussion is done over the ribs with cupped hands to help loosen mucus in the airways. There are some mechanical devices available to help with the therapy.
- Drinking enough fluids keeps the mucus thin; these fluids should be caffeine free and alcohol free.

DON'T FALL - BE SAFE!

Watch yourself in a mirror. Does your body lean or sway back and forth or side to side? People with decreased ability to balance often have a high degree of body sway and are more likely to fall.



November is...

COPD Awareness Month
www.COPDFoundation.org

National Family Caregiver Month
www.caregiveraction.org

TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF

Winning the Caregiving Race

Most people jump into caregiving as if it were a sprint. They think they can and must do everything themselves. You may be able to do that for a few weeks or even months, but the average caregiver spends more than four years in that role—no one can sprint for that long.



Instead of a sprint, treat caregiving as a marathon—for which you have not trained—and pace yourself accordingly from the start. Find effective ways to share or get help from others.

Check with your local Area Agency on Aging or Easter Seals for respite-care programs in your area. Larger churches often have outreach programs that include respite care. Respite care is not a luxury. It is necessary for the well-being of the person in your care and for you.

Caregiver Month Observed in November

by Pamela K. Matura, Executive Director, AAA7

National Family Caregiver Month is celebrated each year in November. In what better month could we express our gratitude for the over 90 million family caregivers nationwide who provide countless hours of care to their loved ones?

The Area Agency on Aging District 7 (AAA7) would like to thank all family caregivers for the selfless acts you do each day. We encourage you to make caregiving for yourself a priority as a caregiver.



Did you know our Agency has a special program available to help family caregivers in their caregiving role? **Powerful Tools for Caregivers** is a six-week program that provides caregivers with a wealth of self-care tools to: reduce personal stress; change negative self-talk; communicate their needs to family members and healthcare or service providers; communicate effectively in challenging situations; recognize the messages in their emotions; deal with difficult feelings; and make tough caregiver decisions. Class participants also receive a copy of The Caregiver Handbook that has been developed specifically for the class.

Powerful Tools for Caregivers is an evidence-based, self-care educational program for family caregivers that has proven to be highly effective, helping caregiver participants learn to minimize the potentially negative impacts of caregiving through discussions and classroom work that emphasize self-care and empowerment. The program is offered several times through the year in our ten-county district area. If you are interested in learning more or would like to add your name to the list for when a class comes near you, please call the AAA7 at 1-800-582-7277.

The AAA7 also has available help through the Caregiver Support Program which is designed to assist caregivers with finding answers about how their caregiving role impacts their life and where to find resources and services to decrease caregiver stress. Caregivers may be caring for an older adult, their adult child with a disability, or the caregiver may be a grandparent caring for their grandchildren or non-relative child. Services include assessments, training, information and assistance, supplemental services, respite, as well as answers and counseling. For more information about the Caregiver Support Program through the Area Agency on Aging District 7, please call 1-800-582-7277.



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Safety Tips - *Flu and Pneumonia*

Influenza, commonly known as the “flu,” is an extremely contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza A or B viruses. Flu appears most frequently in winter and early spring. People with COPD become sick during flu season, and the flu can lead to pneumonia. It’s important to stay current and get vaccinated each year — preferably during October or November, but anytime before flu season begins or even during is good. People with COPD and their caregivers should always...



- Stay away from other people with colds or the flu.
- Wash their hands often and clean the telephone, door knobs, railings, etc. with antibacterial soap after use to prevent the spread of germs.
- Ask the doctor about getting a flu shot (pneumonia shots are also available).
- Go to the doctor as soon as they come down with the flu or a cold.

The American Lung Association offers an online flu-vaccine clinic locator. Visit www.lung.org, type “flu vaccine” in the search bar on the top right. Click on “Find a Flu Shot” and then enter your zip code in the “Flu Vaccine Finder” to learn more about clinics scheduled in your area.