

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON COVID-19 LINKS WITH ASTHMA AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE (COPD)

Questions	Answers
What do people need to know about COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People of all ages can get COVID-19, but older people (60+) and those with pre-existing non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are at higher risk of getting severe symptoms of COVID-19 that can require admission to an intensive care unit (ICU). • These NCDs include cardiovascular diseases (e.g. hypertension, heart attack and stroke), diabetes, chronic respiratory disease (e.g. chronic obstructed pulmonary disease or COPD,) and cancer.
What are signs and symptoms ASTHMA, COPD and COVID?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASTHMA: difficult expiration, but temporary and reversible. Present intermittent symptoms with asymptomatic periods in between, worse at night or early morning • COPD : Difficult expiration but permanent. Symptoms starts in middle age or later (usually after age 40), early morning cough at the beginning, persistent cough in the long run and sputum production; but symptoms don't respond to bronchodilators (e.g salbutamol) • COVID-19: fever, fatigue, headache, cough and sore throat, body aches and difficulty in breathing and accelerated breathing requiring in severe forms admission to an intensive care unit (ICU)
How to differentiate ASTHMA, COPD and COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASTHMA: past history of chronic lung disease; history of seasonal allergy, eczema and/or allergies since childhood or early adulthood • COPD: past history of chronic lung disease; heavy smoking, with more than 20 cigarettes per day for more than 15 years or heavy and prolonged exposure to burning fossil fuels and to dust in an occupational setting • COVID-19: history of travel to a COVID-19 transmission zone or contact with a COVID-19 confirmed case. The COVID-19 test returns positive.
What to do to avoid complications during COVID-19?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAKE medications regularly as prescribed to keep ASTHMA/COPD under control • TREAT all exacerbations to avoid confusion of the respiratory signs of COPD or ASTHMA with those of COVID-19 • EXERCISE regularly - briskly walk, or walk at least 30 minutes a day no matter the place • QUIT smoking or any other form of tobacco use. Seek help from a health professional. • AVOID other environmental exposures such as biomass fuel exposure and air pollution;
Are patient with ASTHMA, COPD more likely to get	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People with Asthma or severe COPD are not at higher risk for contracting COVID-19 but they are more susceptible to severe complications if they do

<p>COVID-19?</p>	<p>contract COVID-19 as COVID-19 most commonly affects the respiratory system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.lung.org/blog/update-covid-19
<p>Should patients still go to the doctor for scheduled visits even with the COVID-19 pandemic?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASTHMA and COPD treatment is always initiated and monitored by a health care provider or at the health facility • TAKE medications regularly as prescribed. This will help to keep the respiratory symptoms under control and avoid acute exacerbations. • KEEP 3 months' supply of prescribed medications
<p>Does medications for ASTHMA or COPD increase the risk of getting sick of COVID-19?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No. ASTHMA and COPD medications do not increase the risk of getting Covid-19 or developing severe COVID-19 disease. • It is advised to Continue to follow the medication and control plans as prescribed.
<p>What to do to lower the risk from COVID-19?</p>	<p>WHO recommends</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Always WEAR a face mask whenever outside the house hold 2. KEEP a safe distance of at least 1 meter from other persons and avoid touching surfaces with your hands. 3. WASH hands often with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand rub. 4. COVER the mouth when coughing (fold of the elbow or disposable handkerchief). 5. Anyone that feels SICK, should stay at home and call a doctor or local emergency number 6. Anyone with COVID like symptoms should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay at home, self-isolate and monitor symptoms if minor symptoms, such as a slight cough or a mild fever • Wear a face mask throughout your illness • When attending the health facility, wear a face mask. • Seek immediate medical care if you have difficulty breathing or pain/pressure in the chest. <p>More information can be found on COVID-19 and on NCD on the following links: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses https://www.afro.who.int/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases</p>