



# Living well with a lung condition



Looking after yourself and your lungs

Respiratory disease affects one in five people in the UK. If you are living with a lung condition, we want to support you to continue to enjoy life by helping you be aware of what may affect your condition, why it's important to pace yourself and how to plan ahead. This booklet has been designed alongside people living with a lung condition, like you, to provide advice and top tips. Remember you are not alone.

## Manage your health

Living with a lung condition can affect you physically and mentally, so it's important to learn about and talk about your condition. Your healthcare team is on hand to answer questions but there are many other reliable and helpful sources of information, either on-line or through local support groups.

### Make sure you:

- **Understand your condition and how it affects your lungs**
- **Recognise your triggers.** These are things that irritate your lungs, making your symptoms worse. Consider keeping a diary to track your triggers
- **Are confident with your medications and how to take them.** If you are unsure, ask your pharmacist or healthcare team

Correct breathing control techniques and effective sputum clearance are key skills to discuss with your health care team. If you have been prescribed an inhaler, it's important you feel confident in using it correctly. It can take a little while to learn how to use inhalers, and getting your medication to the right place is very important. So if you're unsure ask a health care professional to demonstrate, speak to your local pharmacist who may be able to help or view a video from a trusted source such as RightBreathe or Asthma and Lung UK. Remember knowing how to keep your inhaler and equipment clean, is equally as important in keeping you well.

## Take care of yourself

We encourage you to speak to family and friends about your condition and share what you are learning – talk openly, especially about the impact you feel your condition is having. The more people know, the more they can support and help.

- **Stay active and eat well**
- **If you smoke, seek help to stop**
- **In winter - keep warm, get your vaccinations and check the weather before going out**

## Stay well

Good infection prevention control can really help you stay well throughout the year, especially during the peak months of winter (December - March). Think about good hygiene for your equipment, your home and most importantly your hands.

- **Wash your hands regularly**
- **Wipe down surfaces with anti-bacterial products**
- **Keep your equipment, like spacers, clean**
- **In winter, avoid crowded places and confined spaces**
- **Stay away from people who are unwell**

Visit [frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/respiratoryconditions](https://frimleyhealthandcare.org.uk/respiratoryconditions) for more information.



# Take control where you can

## Make sure you have a self management plan

A self management plan is designed to help you manage and understand your condition. Completed with a health care professional and shared with family and friends, it can help you to find personalised ways to manage your symptoms, feel better and take control. Keeping a diary to track your triggers and note questions to discuss with health care professionals can be a great first step and Asthma and Lung UK have produced a downloadable plan to get you started.

## The importance of staying active

When you live with a lung condition it can be tempting to avoid activities that make you breathless but we need to work our heart and lung muscles just as much as other muscles, to support them to stay strong and healthy. Exercise is important not just for our physical health but for our mental health as well. Speak to your healthcare team about a referral to pulmonary rehabilitation. Find advice and guidance on safe exercise with a lung condition at the Asthma and Lung UK website or talk to others living with a lung condition to see what precautions they take.



## Remember take action if unwell

Useful resources can be found at:  
[www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)  
[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
[www.rightbreathe.com](http://www.rightbreathe.com)