



Where can I find out more about health forecasting and COPD?

Find out more about the weather and health by visiting the Met Office health forecasting website

www.metoffice.gov.uk/health/index.html

Here, you will also be able to check whether COPD forecasts are available in your area.

Alternatively, speak to your doctor, nurse or anyone else involved in your care to see if you too can benefit from the service.

Useful reminders

Have your symptoms become worse?

If so, you may need antibiotics and steroids. Either take your own supply or contact your GP's surgery

Medication

Have you enough to last for two weeks?

Keep active

How about going for a walk today?

Lost interest or pleasure in doing things

Depression and anxiety are common. Help is always available from your GP

Eat well

Have you had 5 portions of fruit and vegetables today?

Still smoking

Call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0169

In the winter

Keep your house warm

Check your room temperatures. Keep the living room at 21 °C and the bedroom at 18 °C

Wrap up to keep warm when going outside

Have you checked the weather forecast today?

Avoid infections

If someone you know has a cold, stay away

In the summer

Stay out of the heat

Keep cool

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Health forecasting for COPD

Produced jointly by the NHS and Met Office



What is health forecasting?

In some illnesses, the severity of symptoms can vary throughout the year because of changes in the weather or the presence of infections. The Met Office has studied the relationship between the weather and certain illnesses and uses its findings — with other factors such as virus levels and air pollution — to produce health forecasts. These forecasts help medical staff know when certain patients are at risk of becoming ill, or of their condition becoming worse. Reaching these patients before this happens can help prevent a worsening of symptoms and reduce the need for hospitalisation.

How does the weather affect chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)?

If you have COPD, the weather may affect you in the following ways:

- in winter, cold air may cause your airways to become narrower, making it more difficult to breathe;
- in winter, there is a general increase in the number of chest infections, often caused by viruses;
- in summer, air pollution, heat and humidity can cause breathing difficulties.

This means that extremes of temperature and other aspects of the weather, such as humidity and air pollution, may worsen your symptoms of COPD.

How can health forecasting help me?

Each week, a COPD forecast is produced for the week ahead and sent to healthcare providers who have asked to receive it.

The healthcare providers will then contact certain COPD patients, if there is an increased risk of conditions in the environment making their symptoms worse. These patients will be asked by medical staff to complete a list of actions to protect their health over the coming week. By carrying them out, patients may be able to prevent their condition becoming worse and reduce the risk of going to hospital.