

Treating Flare-Ups (Exacerbations)

Alphas often have [flare-ups](#) (*exacerbations*). You have a number of options for treating flare-ups that may ease your symptoms. It's very important to know all your options. This helps you and your doctor create a treatment plan that suits you best.

Staying on top of your treatment plan every day is vital to your comfort and health. So read on about the following treatment options. And, be sure to talk to your doctor about them.

Medicines for treating flare-ups may include:

What they are

Short-acting [beta-agonists \(SABA\)](#) and [short-acting muscarinic antagonists \(SAMA\)](#)

[Inhaled corticosteroids \(ICS\)](#)

[Antibiotics](#)

[Expectorants](#)

[Oral corticosteroids \(OCS\)](#)

What they do

Increased doses of SABA and SAMA medicines in an inhaler or nebulizer will help open up narrow airways.

Prevent flare-ups or help make them less severe. (However, starting these medicines won't improve current symptoms.)

Stop infection and reduce further lung damage or secondary infections, if taken at the first sign of symptoms.

Help loosen and push mucus out of your airways. Then can help you breathe more easily.

Early use of high-dose oral steroids can stop a flare-up or make it less severe.

If you go to the emergency room during a flare-up, you may receive oxygen therapy.

You may need [oxygen therapy](#) during a flare-up if your oxygen levels are less than 88% saturated. Your arterial blood gases should be checked 30 minutes after you start the oxygen therapy. This ensures that you're getting enough oxygen without retaining carbon dioxide. (Note: Venturi masks are more accurate sources of controlled oxygen than are nasal prongs.)

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You may not be able to prevent flare-ups when you have Alpha-1 COPD, but you can treat them. Work with your doctor to create a care plan. This may include

- Taking medicine
- [Learning to breathe better](#)
- [Quitting smoking](#)
- Controlling stress

Following your care plan will make all the difference in how you feel and how much you can do.

For more in-depth information on this topic, please visit the [Big Fat Reference Guide \(BFRG\)](#). If you are enrolled in AlphaNet's Subscriber Portal, you can access the BFRG [here](#).