



PREPARING FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT

Your health-care provider will want to know as much as possible about your overall health, your difficulties breathing, your family history, and your medications, so start gathering information well in advance of your appointment. Pulling together (or even jotting down) this information will help your health-care provider arrive at an accurate diagnosis and will make your appointment go more smoothly.

Information you'll want to gather includes the following:

- **A record of your health complaints.** What is your breathing like on an everyday basis? Are there certain activities that make you more short of breath? Certain things that seem to help your breathing, or make it worse? Write it all down. You might want to consider keeping an activity log—a record of your activity, breathing, and fatigue—for a few days, as well.
- **A complete list of your medications, supplements, and vitamins.** Include all prescription and over-the-counter medications and supplements, even herbal and natural remedies. If possible, bring the bottles and containers with you to your appointment so your health-care provider can see exactly what you're taking.
- **A list of allergies.** Your health-care provider will want to know any allergies you have, including allergies to medications, foods, environmental allergens such as pollen or pets, and latex. Be prepared to discuss your reaction and any current allergy exposure or treatment.
- **Your past medical history.** Your health-care provider will be especially interested in any lung and breathing problems you've had in the past, as well as what treatments you underwent. If you have had previous tests such as breathing tests (spirometry or pulmonary function tests) or imaging of your lungs the results from your tests will be helpful. Also be prepared to discuss any other medical diagnoses or conditions you may have.
- **A record of your smoking/pollution exposure.** Do you smoke? If so, when did you start? How many packs per day (or week) did you/do you smoke? Have you ever been exposed to secondhand smoke? Indoor air pollution? Do you or did you work in a smoke-, dust-, or chemical-filled environment?
- **Family history.** Does anyone else in your family have a history of lung or breathing problems?
- **Questions.** It's a good idea to write down any questions you may have, so you don't forget to ask them when you're at your appointment.