

COPD & Asthma

Nursing

Two obstructive diseases that behave — and are nursed — differently.

Asthma

- Variable, largely reversible obstruction
- Often younger onset; atopy common
- Symptoms vary by day, night and trigger
- Peak flow varies against personal best
- Silent chest is an emergency sign

COPD

- Persistent, largely irreversible obstruction
- Usually older; smoking or exposure history
- Daily symptoms with acute exacerbations
- Sputum change often signals exacerbation
- Some patients have a lower oxygen target

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Both need inhaler technique checked at every opportunity — poor technique looks exactly like poor control.

Educational reference. Oxygen targets are prescribed individually and may be lower in COPD. Never alter oxygen outside the prescription.