

People with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) have said a new app is giving them confidence and control over their long-term respiratory condition.

The app provides the most up to date advice from clinicians who are experts in the field of COPD. It shows how to manage the condition properly and is offered through the respiratory nurse specialist teams in the community.

People using the app are able to follow videos to help perfect their inhaler technique, expert education on their condition and online pulmonary rehabilitation at home. We at Tamar Valley Health are very much leading the way in offering the app to people with the long-term condition. One of our patients, a lady in her early 70s, was diagnosed with COPD nine years ago and has been using the app since May.

She says it has changed her life and it has meant she hasn't had to visit the hospital for her condition in over a year.

She said: "I was invited to attend a workshop through my GP practice, and while I'm not a tech whizz, there was a really helpful chap at the event who signed me up to the app and I've had very little problem with the app since I started using it.

"I have never felt more in control of my condition than I do now. I get up in the morning, use the app, get the care and support I need such as doing the exercises that are really easy to do at home and checking my lung function against the previous result, and then carry on with my day. It's so useful and it means I don't have to spend time travelling to and from appointments."

She also added that before the app she attended hospital appointments up to two or three times a year, and the respiratory team five times a week.

"At one point I couldn't even walk up a flight of steps but now I can, albeit it slowly and I haven't had pneumonia this winter. The app has made a huge difference to my life, it's been a really good experience, it's been absolutely marvellous", she added.

Dr Rob White, Governing Body member and clinical lead GP for respiratory at NHS Kernow Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "We know that many people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) struggle with inhaler techniques and as a result the medication doesn't reach the right place to work effectively.

Rachel Williams, Clinical Specialist Respiratory Physiotherapist at Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, said: "It's great to see that people with COPD are able to take control of this long-term condition with just a few clicks.

"The app contains sections on rehabilitation, inhalers and how to use them correctly. It also has information on breathing techniques, relaxation and mindfulness. The patients can keep a check on their COPD over time and have information provided by experts at their fingertips when they are starting to struggle.

"Nine times out of 10 people have their inhalers but are not using them correctly. The videos featured on the app show them how to improve their technique and we've seen really good improvements from people who have used the videos.

"People using the myCOPD app have said that it has helped boost their confidence and understanding of the self-management of their condition. They also say it gives them validation that they managing their COPD correctly. Of course, if people are worried they continue to have access to their doctor and the respiratory team."

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