

# Eating Well for Your Lungs

## You have been given this leaflet to help you eat well and keep as healthy as possible.

Your diet and nutritional intake are very important when you have a disease like COPD.

COPD can have an effect on your whole body. It is therefore important to eat a balanced and varied diet to help maintain your strength and fitness, as well as help your body fight infections.

When you are feeling well and strong, healthy eating can keep you feeling this way.

It is important to think about your weight. If you are very overweight your heart and lungs have to work harder to supply oxygen to your body. Likewise if you are too thin you are more at risk from infections.

Ask your nurse what your Body Mass Index (BMI) is. If it is between 20 and 30, that is a healthy weight for someone with COPD.

If you find you are struggling to eat well and find that you are losing weight it is a good idea to mention this to your doctor or nurse.

## Protein Foods



### For healthy strong muscles (including those that help with breathing)

- Try to take a portion of a protein food with at least 2 meals during the day, e.g. lunch and dinner
- Foods that provide us with protein include: meat, fish, eggs, dairy products (cheese, yogurt, milk), tofu, beans, and lentils

## Carbohydrate Foods



### For energy

- Starchy foods include: potatoes, bread, pasta, rice, cereals - always include a starchy food at each meal
- Sugary foods include: cakes, biscuits, sweets, fizzy drinks - try to take in the diet occasionally.

## Fruit and Vegetables

### For essential vitamins and minerals to boost your immune system

- We should include plenty of fruit and vegetables in our diets - aim to try and get five portions a day
- Your fruit and vegetables can be fresh, frozen, canned - they all count

## Dairy Foods



### For strong bones

- People with COPD can have weaker bones. This can be a result of your medication or because you are less active
- Dairy foods include: cheese, milk, yoghurt, cream, fromage frais - include a helping or portion of dairy food in your diet three times per day

## High Energy Foods



### High energy foods are the ones to think about if you are trying to reduce your weight.

They tend to contain a lot of calories but don't provide many of the important nutrients for your body - try to cut back on these foods.

High energy foods are those that are high in fat (e.g. chips, fried foods, meat pies), high in sugar (e.g. fizzy drinks, sweets), or high in both sugar and fat (e.g. chocolate, cream cakes).

## Diet and Breathing

If you become breathless when eating you may find it easier to eat three smaller meals and have snacks in between meals, however it is important not to reduce your overall food intake.

## Eating and Smoking

Giving up smoking is a fantastic step to increasing your health and fitness but you may find your weight increases slightly. Don't be too concerned about this. The most important thing is to keep off cigarettes.

## Eating and Exercise

If you are living with COPD it is very important to keep as active as possible, this helps your lungs and also the rest of your body to stay strong.

Try and gently increase the amount of activity you are doing yourself, and ask about local activity programmes.