

COPD Improving Your Nutrition

You have been given this diet sheet because, although you are quite well, you have lost some weight or muscle strength.

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.

If you are finding it a struggle to eat enough or are losing weight (e.g. your clothes and jewellery or watch are feeling looser), or you notice that you are losing strength in your muscles and your body shape is changing. This is the time you need to think differently about the foods you are eating. Following the advice in this leaflet will help you regain the strength and weight you have lost.

If you continue to lose weight, speak 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 – always include a starchy food at each meal



- Starchy foods include: potatoes, bread, pasta, rice, cereals
- Sugary foods include: cakes, biscuits, sweets, fizzy drinks.

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 - don't choose low fat options.

High Energy Foods



High energy foods are the most helpful types of food to help you gain weight.

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) Include in your diet as often as possible.

Diet and Breathing



If you find you are eating less because you are short of breath you may find it easier to eat three smaller meals and have snacks in between meals.

Aim to eat something or have a milky drink six times per day.

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.

Continue to try and gently increase the amount of activity you are doing yourself but make sure you have a high energy snack after each exercise

Ask your doctor or nurse about local activity programmes.

Tips for Improving Your Intake

When you are unable to get enough energy and nutrients into your diet to maintain your weight and strength, the following tips will help you increase your energy intake:

- Choose full fat or high energy options e.g. (whole milk) and avoid the lower fat varieties
- Add grated or cream cheese to mashed potato, soups, sauces, scrambled eggs, baked beans
- Add cream to sauces, scrambled eggs, soups, mashed potatoes, desserts, cereals and porridge
- Use mayonnaise or dressing in sandwiches and on salads
- Add extra butter or margarine to vegetables, potatoes, scrambled eggs and bread
- Make fortified milk – whisk 2-4 tablespoons of milk powder to one pint of milk; add this to drinks, puddings, cereals, soups and sauces
- Add extra honey, syrup and jams
- Try to take nourishing drinks like smoothies, soups, fruit juice, milkshakes, hot chocolate, energy drinks
- Don't feel that you need to stick to three meals a day, try to take small meals and snacks or nourishing drinks between meals
- Use convenience foods when you don't feel up to preparing foods from scratch, have some standbys in the freezer or cupboard. Good store cupboard ideas: long life milk, savoury snacks, biscuits, rice puddings, corned beef, baked beans, macaroni cheese, soups, tinned puddings and custard
- Don't fill up on drinks before or during your meal
- Eat more of the type of foods that you feel like, when you aren't feeling great don't worry about having the perfect diet
- Try not to miss meals as you will feel even worse.

Monitor Your Weight

It is a good idea to keep an eye on your weight as it is a good indicator of what is happening in your body. If you can, weigh yourself monthly.

If you are unable to weight yourself, be aware of visual signs of your weight dropping, for example jewellery and clothes becoming looser.

If you continue to lose weight seek advise from your doctor or nurse