



mercy care

LIVING WELL WITH COPD

Fall/Winter 2022

Eat well, breathe better

A healthy diet is important for all of us. That's especially true if you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Making the right choices may help you breathe easier.

For instance, eating a good source of protein at least twice a day can help keep the muscles you use for breathing strong. Good protein sources include:

- Milk and cheese
- Eggs
- Meat, fish and poultry
- Nuts, beans and peas

For some people, eating fewer carbs and more fats is best for breathing. Healthy fats can include things like avocados, nuts and olive oil.

Some people may also need to limit salt (sodium) in their diet.

Ask your doctor what's best for you.

When you're fatigued or full

If COPD affects your appetite or energy, you might feel too tired or full to eat. These tips can help you get the nutrients you need:

- Rest before eating.
- Eat four to six small meals a day rather than three big ones.
- Eat your biggest meals earlier in the day, when you're likely to have more energy.
- Drink water an hour after meals, rather than with it.

Sources: American Dietetic Association (www.eatright.org); American Lung Association (www.lung.org); COPD Foundation (www.copdfoundation.org)

It's not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to www.MercyCareAZ.org or call Member Services at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.



Dust and air pollution. If possible, stay indoors and keep your windows closed when there's lots of pollution or dust outside.

Chemical fumes. Ask your doctor what you can do to lower your risk at work. Do you need to paint or spray for insects at home? Have someone else do those chores. If you can, stay someplace else for a while.

Lung infections. Fight off cold and flu germs by washing your hands often. Get shots to protect you from the flu and pneumonia.

One last tip: Take your COPD medicines exactly as prescribed. That's a must for keeping your lungs working well.

Sources: American Lung Association (www.lung.org); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

Avoid things that make COPD worse

Living well with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) means protecting your lungs. What's the best way to do that if you have COPD?

If you smoke, the first — and most important — step is to stop. Ask others not to smoke around you too.

If you're having trouble quitting, your doctor can help. There are programs and medicines that can help you break your addiction.

Then do your best to avoid other things that make breathing harder. Those include:

4 ways to take charge

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.

3. Take your medications.

4. Aim for healthy habits.

Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (www.niddk.nih.gov)

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