

Nutrition Tips

Part of staying healthy involves eating a well balanced diet. COPD patients use up to 10 times more energy for breathing than people without lung disease. A good diet can improve the way your lungs work, prevent infections and improve your quality of life. Eat a variety of foods, avoid concentrated sweets, eat small frequent meals, and drink plenty of fluids.

A balanced diet includes a combination of:

- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Dairy products
- Grains
- Protein
- Some fats

See a dietician to get the right breakdown of foods/nutrients for you.

Cooking tips:

When you have trouble breathing, activities can make you feel really tired. Cooking is one of these activities. One of the most important things about cooking is to have a plan.

Plan: Think about what you are going to make in advance. Once you have a plan, you can go to the kitchen and take out all the ingredients at once. Prepare meals in advance (slow cookers are helpful). Casseroles and pre-packaged foods save time and energy. Plan your meal well before you get into the kitchen. Sit while you prepare foods. By planning, you can avoid any unnecessary trips to the fridge and back.

Pace: By having a plan, it will be easier to save some energy while you cook. The meal that you prepare should depend on how you feel. If you are not having a good day, then look towards meals that you may have prepared in the past. If it is a good day, go ahead and make that 3 course meal you have been thinking about. Always take breaks so that you won't get too tired. Eat your main meal earlier in the day if you have more energy then.

It is hard to chew when you cannot breathe. Cooking and other activities can make you tired. Remember to rest before meal time. Avoid talking while chewing. Take breaks to breathe in between bites. Avoid large meals - split a meal into smaller snacks. This will help prevent shortness of breath.

Eat foods based on how you feel. Avoid dry, hard to chew foods. A lot of energy goes into chewing food. If you are not feeling good, eat soft and easy to chew foods. Limit foods that are gas forming (beans, onions, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, cucumbers, corn or melons). These foods can make you feel bloated and feeling short of breath. It is important to know what foods affect your breathing and to limit them.

Grocery shopping tips:

Use a shopping cart when you are in the store. Avoid shopping on weekends and during "rush hour". Pack items into bags that have handles. Try not to make the bags too heavy. Pack perishable items together. When you get home, put the items that need to be refrigerated away. The other items can be put away later to save energy.

Remember that medications can affect your diet.

*It is important to check with your doctor or pharmacist about interactions related to the medications that you are taking.