



Eating and Breathing with COPD

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Food and nutrition can help you manage your shortness of breath. This handout provides tips on how to lessen symptoms and maintain good nutrition.

Tips

- Instead of eating 3 large meals a day, eat small, high-calorie meals every 2 to 3 hours.
- Avoid overeating so that you do not get very full.
- Avoid foods that create gas. For some people, these foods include cabbage, broccoli, beans, cucumbers, and beer.
- Before you eat, rest for at least 30 minutes. If you have just exercised, wait for about 1 hour before eating.
- If you have nasal oxygen, use it during mealtime.
- Have someone help you prepare meals.
- Drink plenty of fluids, especially if you have a problem with mucus in your lungs. Drink 2 to 3 quarts of fluid every day.
- Have easy-to-eat snacks and meals available. Some ideas are frozen dinners, granola bars, peanut butter and crackers, or protein supplements.
- Eat slowly and relax. Do not rush meals. Breathe evenly while you chew. Take a few deep breaths if you have to.
- If you are underweight and you get full too fast, drink your fluids between meals and eat the foods with the highest calories first at meals. This means eating your meat, potatoes and dessert first and then eating your vegetables and fruit.
- If you are underweight, add extra fats to your foods. Some common fats are butter or margarine, mayonnaise, gravy, cream, cream cheese, peanut butter, and oil.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns.

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