

NUTRITION & COPD

Why is nutrition important?

Within all aspects of life, a healthy diet can make significant improvements to your wellbeing. This is especially true when living with a chronic lung disease. Often, symptoms and progression are only addressed through medications. People living with chronic lung disease should also be aware of the importance of lifestyle change and how it can improve health outcomes over time. Proper nutrition has been shown to help reduce symptom exacerbations and slow the progression of COPD. ⁱ

Talk to your healthcare provider about how to incorporate healthy eating into your COPD management plan.



Adding Extra Calories

When living with COPD, you may expend twice as much energy from calories to control your breathing as compared to those without lung disease. Many people living with COPD may experience malnourishment and unintended weight loss. Research suggests that individuals experiencing these symptoms may need to eat more calories to increase energy and maintain weight. ⁱⁱ If you are experiencing fatigue, dyspnea (shortness of breath), and a lack of appetite, you should ask your healthcare provider which healthy and calorie-dense foods you should add to your daily diet.

Some suggested foods include:

- Dried Fruit
- Nuts
- Sweet Potato
- Avocado
- Dark Chocolate
- Fish
- Peanut Butter
- Wholegrains
- Ensure[®] Nutrition Shake



Increasing Important Vitamins

COPD patients may also experience a lack of important vitamins that keep the body healthy. This can include vitamin D, which we get from sunlight, and calcium from dairy. Low levels of vitamin D and calcium can cause bone weakness (osteoporosis) and muscle weakness along with other exacerbated COPD symptoms.ⁱⁱⁱ



Vitamin D is also important in helping your body fight off viruses and bacterial illnesses. This is especially important for COPD patients to reduce their risk of infections, including the flu and COVID-19.^{iv}

If you are experiencing these symptoms or want to boost your immune system, speak to your healthcare provider about how to add more sources of vitamin D and calcium into your diet.

Some suggested foods:

- Dairy
- Fatty Fish (salmon and tuna)
- Egg Yolks
- Orange Juice
- Cereal
- Leafy Greens

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 - ii. **Rawal, G., & Yadav, S. (2015).** Nutrition in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: A review. *Journal of Translational Internal Medicine*, 3(4), 151–154. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jtim-2015-0021>
 - iii. **Janssens, W., Mathieu, C., Boonen, S., & Decramer, M. (2011).** Vitamin D deficiency and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease: a vicious circle. *Vitamins and Hormones*, 86, 379–399. <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-386960-9.00017-4>
 - iv. **CDC. (2021, May 14).** Critical Vitamins and Minerals. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/micronutrient-malnutrition/about-micronutrients/why-it-matters.html>