Healthy Eating for Better Breathing

TIPS for Healthy Eating

Good nutrition and choosing a balanced diet are important for people affected by chronic lung disease. Eating well improves your energy level, helps to maintain your muscle strength, and may reduce the risk of developing lung infections.

People with lung disease may use more energy while breathing than the average person. It is important to consume enough calories to produce energy in order to prevent wasting or weakening of the diaphragm and other pulmonary muscles.

TIPS for Healthy Eating

1. Always start your day with breakfast. Skipping a meal will make it hard to get all the nutrients you need each day.

2. Plan to eat at regular times every day.

3. Try eating small frequent meals and snacks instead of three large meals.

   Overeating can make breathing uncomfortable.

4. If you are tired, rest before eating and take plenty of time to eat.

5. Eat slowly and chew foods thoroughly.

6. Enjoy a larger meal earlier in the day or when your appetite is best.

   • Cook when you are most energetic.
   • Choose foods that are easy to prepare.

7. Drink plenty of fluids

   • Aim for 6-8 cups of liquids each day to keep mucus thin and easier to cough up.

8. Limit caffeine (coffee, tea, colas, energy drinks) as it might interfere with your medications and fill you up.

9. Eat fewer foods that provide little to no nutritional value.

   • Occasional treats are okay but try choosing nutritious food more often.

10. Wear your cannula while eating if continuous oxygen is prescribed.

11. Keep mealtime enjoyable and interesting!

If you are eating alone, try to choose a comfortable place to eat. Try playing some of your favorite music while eating.

If you are struggling to eat healthy, lose weight or gain weight, you may benefit from the advice of a Registered Dietitian. Ask your doctor or health care team member for a referral to a dietitian.