



Living Well with COPD

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)

Prevent Pneumonia

Pneumonia is an infection of the air sacs in one or both of your lungs. It is commonly caused by bacteria and viruses. These germs enter your body through your mouth or nose and then settle into the air sacs of your lungs.

Contact your health care provider if you experience one or more of the following symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Changes in the color, thickness, or amount of mucus
- Shortness of breath or more rapid breathing
- Feeling your heart racing or pounding
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Chest pain when taking deep breaths
- New or worsening cough

Source: COPD Foundation (www.copdfoundation.org)

Contact us

Mercy Care
4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Member Services:
602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879 (TTY **711**),
Monday through Friday,
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ACC-RBHA members with SMI:
602-586-1841 or
1-800-564-5465 (TTY **711**),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour nurse line:
602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879

Additional contacts:
<https://www.mercycareaz.org/contact-us.html>

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www.MercyCareAZ.org

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 key 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. Or call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**.

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

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 to keep your lungs working well.

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



Don't forget!

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. COPD also places people at high risk for pneumonia. Those with COPD should speak to their doctor about pneumococcal vaccines.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.