

Nutrition for COPD

Eating a balanced, anti-inflammatory diet is a very important part of managing COPD. While it can be difficult to focus on this aspect of your life, your food choices have a direct correlation with disease progression. The average person requires about 50 calories per day for breathing. Individuals with COPD may expend 750 calories per day on breathing alone. This increases daily calorie requirements, often making it difficult to maintain weight. By incorporating nutrient-rich foods into your life, you can begin the healing process. Here are a few things you can do to get going in the right direction:

Maintain a Healthy Body Weight

If you are overweight, your heart and lungs have to work harder, making breathing more difficult. The extra weight may demand more oxygen. In contrast, being underweight might make you feel weak and tired, and increase the risk of getting an infection. Due to the increased use of pulmonary muscles in someone with COPD, calorie needs may be up to 10 times more in comparison to a person without COPD.

Increase Fruits and Vegetables

COPD may increase your requirements for both calories and nutrients. Fruits and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals, trace minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals that work with your body to reduce inflammation. Try including fruit or vegetables with every meal and snack. Make a list of your favorites and add them to your weekly grocery list.

Small and Frequent Meals

Eating smaller portions more often can help reduce the shortness of breath caused by the crowding of the diaphragm from overfeeding. Small, frequent meals and snacks also reduce incidents of reflux, which can lead to heartburn, indigestion, and discomfort with eating.

Include Healthy Fats

Healthy fats are part of a balanced diet and will contribute to you meeting your daily energy needs. Heart-healthy fats, like avocado, pumpkin seeds, cashews, pistachios, almonds, tahini, coconut oil, chia seeds and extra virgin olive oil are ideal for those with COPD.

Minimize High Fat Animal Proteins

Research indicates that high saturated fat foods like pork, bacon, beef, non-lean chicken and turkey, and full-fat dairy products may lead to an increase in unhealthy LDL cholesterol levels. Elevated LDL may contribute to the oxidative burden in the respiratory system. Try substituting some of these high-fat protein

foods with plant proteins, like peas, black beans, quinoa, hummus, chickpeas, almonds, sweet potato, Yukon gold potato, edamame, oatmeal and chia seeds.

Hydration is Key

It is important to drink plenty of water to maintain hydration for your body and especially your lungs. Aim to drink at least 8 glasses of water throughout the day. Squeezing fresh lemon or lime into the water will provide additional electrolytes to hydrate your cells. Having fluids in between or after meals is ideal, as drinking right before or during meals may cause you to become uncomfortably full or bloated.

Resources

- COPD Foundation: www.copdfoundation.org

Here when you need us.

Call: 844-207-5465

Online: guidanceresources.com

App: GuidanceNowSM

Web ID: LivingME

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