

Nutrition.



Food is fuel and our body needs it for all activities including breathing. One way to think of eating is to compare it to filling up a car with fuel.

The quality of the fuel counts too. Our bodies require a lot of energy or fuel in order to help us breathe. People who have COPD have increased energy requirements compared to a person who does not have a lung disease. Breathlessness can make the motion of eating tiring. Eating can also induce greater breathlessness.

Body mass index (BMI) is a simple tool for use with the general population. It takes into account height as well as weight.

$$\text{BMI} = \frac{\text{weight in kg}}{\text{height in metres squared}}$$

BMI

- Above 31 – Obese
- 26–30 – Overweight
- 20–25 – Normal range
- Below 19 – Underweight

COPD can impact greatly on your nutrition, so maintaining a healthy body weight through a balanced diet enhances general well being, improves physical capacity and helps prevent infections. It is important to eat well including plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to help fight infections.



Wholegrain/high fibre bread, cereals, rice, pasta and potatoes can provide energy, vitamins, minerals and fibre. These are more filling and help maintain a healthy bowel. Try and include one at each meal time.

Meat and Fish can provide protein, vitamins and minerals. These contain lots of energy and help to maintain muscle and bone strength. Try and aim for 2 servings every day.

1 serving = 75g cooked meat or 100g cooked fish or 100g soya, quorn or tofu.

Milk and dairy foods can provide protein and calcium for healthy bones and teeth. Try and aim for 3 servings each day.

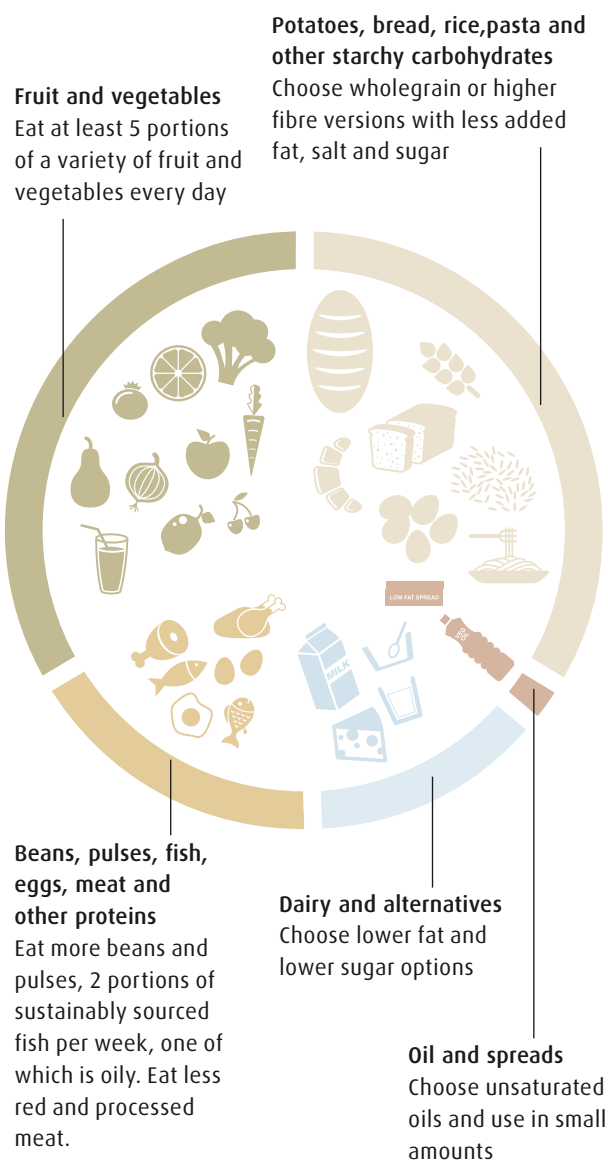
1 serving = 200ml (1/3 pint) milk or 30g red cheese or 150g yoghurt pot or 50g half fat cheese or 75g cottage cheese.

Fruit and vegetables can provide important vitamins, minerals and fibre. Try and aim for at least 5 servings each day.

1 serving = 80g. 1 piece of fruit e.g. 1 apple, 1 pear, 1 banana or 12 grapes, 1 large slice of melon, 1 small glass of fruit juice, 2 tablespoons of vegetables or 2 tablespoons of dried fruit.

Note: There's not enough scientific evidence to support a link between dairy products and producing more mucus. So you should include dairy foods in your diet unless you've been diagnosed with an allergy. If you do find dairy makes your mucus stickier or harder to shift, try rinsing your mouth and drinking a little water after drinking or eating milk products

The eatwell plate



6-8 glasses of water a day

Water, lower fat milk, sugar-free drinks including tea and coffee all count. Limit fruit juice and/or smoothies to a total of 150ml a day.

Food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Eat less often and in small amounts

Calories per day

An average woman needs to eat about 2000 calories per day. An average man needs 2500 calories. However, this depends on numerous factors.

Check the label on packaged food

Choose foods lower in fat, salt and sugars

Each serving (150g) contains				
Energy 1046kJ 250kcal	Fat 3.0g	Saturated 1.3g	Sugars 34g	Salt 0.9g
	LOW	LOW	HIGH	MED
13%	4%	7%	38%	15%

of an adult's reference intake

Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal

Common problems

Breathlessness or fatigue when preparing meals

Use fast and easy recipes and cook more than one meal at once. Cook more than one portion at a time and freeze it for a later date. Soft foods are easier to manage with breathlessness/fatigue

Breathlessness or fatigue when eating

Rest before and after your meal. Ensure you sit upright. Take your time and cut food into small bite size pieces. Try foods which don't require much chewing. Use your reliever inhaler (blue) and your chest clearance techniques before meals.

Bloating and getting wind

Eat slowly and chew food well. Avoid fizzy drinks and food which encourages bloating e.g. beans, cabbage, onions, grapes, peas, corn and dried fruit. Keep bowels regular.

Feeling full too quickly

Drink fewer liquids during meals. Instead sip on fluids an hour before meals.

Constipation

Eat foods that are high in fibre, e.g. brown rice, bran or oat based cereals, wholemeal or multigrain bread. Drink at least 8 glasses of water a day (if not on a fluid restriction) Exercise regularly according to your ability.

Overweight

If you are overweight it makes it harder for muscles to work and can worsen shortness of breath. Maintaining a healthy diet can help achieve gradual weight loss.

Tips

- Rest before meals to ensure you enjoy food
- Take your time eating your meal
- Have main meal when you have most energy (for most people this is midday)
- Have 3 small meals and 3 snacks a day. This helps prevent becoming too full as this can cause bloating which may lead to breathlessness.
- Aim for foods that are high in protein.
- Discuss with a health professional first if you have problems with your kidneys.
- Cut food up into bite size pieces or mash or liquidize your food. This makes eating less of an effort.
- Use a smaller plate
- Soft foods are easier to eat
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to prevent constipation and infections.
- Drink lots of water unless you have a fluid restriction. This helps keep the lining of your

airways moist and your phlegm (sputum) will be thinner.

How much water should you drink? Drinking a minimum of six to eight cups of fluid (including tea, coffee, milk, squash, or fruit juice) a day. By keeping well hydrated, the mucus you produce in your airways and lungs is easier to move, and less likely to be a site for infection.



Underweight

Being under weight can cause lack of energy and you may need to eat more to increase the energy levels.

It is quite common to lose your appetite or have difficulty eating due to shortness of breath, taste changes (often caused by medications), anxiety and stress. If you don't eat enough or you lose weight quickly, the muscles you use to breathe can be affected. If you have any other medical problems such as diabetes or high blood pressure it is advisable to discuss these changes with your GP first.

Tips

- Eat small meals, 5-6 times daily. Don't wait to be hungry. Having regular snacks between meals is important especially if you are not eating much at mealtimes.
- Try and eat more at the time of day when you have more appetite
- Consider over-the-counter options such as Complan, Aymes

Shake and Meritene Energis.

Use these in between meals to minimise the impact on your appetite for main meals.

- Use food that is high in proteins and calories to increase the energy content of your food for example cheese, yoghurt, ghee, chapattis, Dahl, eggs, milk based drinks.
- Avoid drinking liquids up to 30 minutes before a meal.
- Eat plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables to prevent constipation and infections.
- Rest before meals so you can enjoy your food.
- Take your time eating your meal.
- Remain sitting for 30-60 minutes after each meal to improve digestion.
- Simplify meal preparation e.g. use canned soup, frozen meals, sandwiches.

If you require this leaflet in another language, braille or audio tape please contact us on 0800 012 1858.

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