

# Nutrition and Lung Disease

People with lung disease often need to eat more calories (energy). Lung disease can also make it more difficult to eat.

The food you eat can help keep your muscles strong, make breathing easier, and help your body fight illness so you do not get sick.

## If you feel out of breath when you eat

- Eat small, frequent meals. Larger meals can take more energy to eat.
- Eat soft foods that are easier to chew. Try cooked vegetables, ground or slow-cooked meats, pasta, and soups.
- Try nutritional drinks like Boost®, Ensure®, or smoothies.
- Chew your food well. Remember to breathe while you are chewing.
- Sit up while eating to help you breathe.
- Talk less during mealtimes. Save your energy for eating.

## If you are too tired to eat

- Eat your largest meal when you have the most energy.
- Rest before you eat so you have more energy.

## If you are not hungry

- Eat small meals or snacks every 1 to 2 hours.
- Have a high-protein food and a high-energy food with each meal. See the next page.
- Avoid low-calorie or “diet” foods.
- Try sipping on nutritional drinks between meals.

## If you are too tired to cook

- Eat foods that are easy to make such as:

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Cheese and crackers                        | Eggs                                |
| Cereal with milk                           | Smoothies                           |
| Nuts and trail mix                         | Frozen meals                        |
| Canned fish with crackers                  | Prepared soups                      |
| Sandwiches                                 | Peanut butter on toast              |
| Hummus with crackers or pre-cut vegetables | Yogurt or cottage cheese with fruit |
- Prepare your meals when you have the most energy. If you can, make extra and freeze it for another day.
- Try a meal or grocery delivery service.
- Try nutritional drinks such as Boost® or Ensure®.

## If you have constipation

Constipation is when you have difficulty passing bowel movements (poop) and they are hard and dry. Constipation and bloating can make shortness of breath worse.

- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Choose high-fibre foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.
- Help your body get used to more fibre by slowly increasing the amount of fibre you eat.
- Exercise regularly. All movement helps including walking, chair yoga, and stretching.

## If you have trouble with mucus

Drink at least 6 cups (1500 mL or 50 oz) of fluid each day. Fluids help make the mucus thin and easier for your body to clear.

All foods with liquid help, including soups, smoothies, juice, milk, coffee, tea, carbonated drinks, and water.

## High-protein and high-energy foods

Try to have a high-protein food with each meal and snack. If you have a poor appetite, or if you are losing weight without trying, try to have a high-protein food and a high-energy food with each meal and snack.

| High-protein foods                                      | High-energy foods  |
|---|--|
| Beef, pork, lamb, goat, chicken, and turkey             | Nuts and seeds, including butters and spreads like peanut butter           |
| Fish and shellfish                                      | Avocado  |
| Eggs  | Full-fat dairy products such as 3.25% milk, cheese, yogurt, and sour cream |
| Milk, cheese, and yogurt                                | Salad dressing   |
| Soy foods such as tofu, tempeh, and edamame             | Oils including olive oil, avocado, and canola                              |
| Beans and lentils                                       | Butter and margarine   |
| Nuts and nut spreads like peanut butter                 | Mayonnaise   |
| Seeds such as pumpkin seeds, hemp hearts, and trail mix | Canned coconut milk  |
| Protein powder  |  |
| Nutritional drinks such as Boost® or Ensure®            |  |

## Lung disease and weight

People with lung disease often lose weight without trying. This can happen to people of all body sizes. The weight loss can make you tired and your muscles weak. This can make it harder for you to breathe normally.

If you are at a higher body weight, focus on actions you can do for your health rather than the number on the scale. Some examples of healthy things you can do are eating healthy food, exercising every day, sleeping well, managing your stress, and being involved in healthy relationships.

## High-calcium foods

People with lung disease are more likely to get weak bones. You can protect your bones by eating foods with lots of calcium in them, including the following:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Milk  | Tofu   |
| Cheese  | Yogurt   |
| Tempeh  | White beans  |
| Almonds   | Tahini (sesame spread)                                   |
| Drinks with added calcium like soy milk, or almond milk | Canned fish with bones like salmon, herring, or mackerel |

## Vitamin D

Vitamin D is also important for bone health. Talk with your doctor or dietitian about taking a Vitamin D supplement.