

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH COPD

### What is an exacerbation?

**W**ith chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), you might sometimes feel your symptoms suddenly get much worse. This is called a flare-up or an exacerbation. During a flare-up, breathing usually becomes harder. Other symptoms include more coughing and spitting up mucus. It's often caused by an infection, such as a cold or pneumonia. It can also be caused by triggers like smoke, cleaning products, and dust mites.

Flare-ups can cause your COPD to progress faster, so it's important to try to keep

them from happening. The best way to prevent an exacerbation is to recognize the warning signs and know when to get help. Talk to your doctor about an **action plan**. Discuss common symptoms, such as:

- Coughing or wheezing more than usual
- Shortness of breath that is worse than usual
- An increase in mucus
- Change in the color of your mucus to yellow, green, tan, or bloody

- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Fever
- Confusion or feeling very tired
- Swelling in your feet or ankles

Your action plan will guide you on what to do when you experience any of these symptoms. Know when to call your doctor and when you should call 911. An exacerbation can be serious. Watch for early warning signs, and don't ignore them.



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## Do you need oxygen therapy?

**H**aving COPD makes it harder to breathe. Oxygen therapy is a treatment that provides you with extra oxygen. It can help you feel better and stay active.

To determine if you need oxygen, your doctor will use a pulse oximeter device. This will determine if you could benefit from a prescription for oxygen therapy. Here are some things you should know about it:

### You'll start by talking to your doctor

Explain what you'd like to be able to do while using oxygen. Talk about your

lifestyle, and how you expect oxygen therapy to fit. Bring up any concerns you have about using it.

### Timing plays a role

A lung infection or flare-up can cause oxygen levels to decline. If you start oxygen therapy while you're hospitalized, you might not need it long-

term. Talk to your doctor about what's right for you.

### Equipment options

You can get oxygen therapy at home with a few different devices. Your doctor will order the oxygen therapy that he or she determines is right for you. The oxygen is delivered through nasal prongs or a face mask. Most equipment can attach to other medical devices, such as CPAP machines or ventilators.

### Safety tips

Once you're set up, learn how to use oxygen safely and how to check your oxygen levels. Ask your doctor for a certificate of medical necessity. It states that you need supplemental oxygen as well as the exact type and amount you need.

## Care Advocate Spotlight

**Laura Lippert** has been with AvMed for 16 years, and a Care Advocate for the last 10 years.



"My favorite thing about being a Care Advocate is the members I am privileged to speak to and assist — and knowing that possibly I might have made someone's life a bit brighter or easier, or perhaps lessened their burden a little."



## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's Registered Dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

## What's so great about the Mediterranean diet?



**Y**ou've no doubt heard of the Mediterranean diet. It's been named the best diet by *U.S. News & World Report* for the past several years. And tons of research back up its health benefits, which include better heart health, less inflammation, weight loss, cancer prevention, and more.

The Mediterranean diet is more of a lifestyle change than a strict "diet" with specific rules to follow. But you don't have to live on

the Mediterranean coast to reap the benefits of this eating style. Adding some of its key principles to your day can help. Here's how:

### Add more fruits and vegetables

Plant foods are the base of the Mediterranean diet. The fiber and nutrients from these foods are great for your health. Try to add vegetables to every meal. Swap dessert for fresh fruit. And experiment with meatless meals based on beans and grains instead.

### Eat fish and seafood at least twice a week

Seafood has omega-3 fats and minerals that benefit heart and brain health. Instead of chicken or beef, serve fish like tuna, salmon, trout, and sardines.

### Use healthy fats from plant foods

Unsaturated fats from plant foods are better for your health than saturated fats from animal foods. Swap butter for oils like olive or canola in your cooking.

### Enjoy meals with loved ones

The Mediterranean diet isn't just about the food. Being active and socializing are part of the Mediterranean lifestyle too. Eat meals with family and friends, then take a stroll together after dinner.

### Unencrypted email makes it easier to communicate with your case manager!

To opt in, scan the QR code with your phone. Log in or register to the member portal and select "Set My Preferences."



## Mediterranean Bean Salad

### Recipe



Serves 6  
Prep time:  
15 minutes

### Ingredients

¼ cup olive oil	1 small red onion, minced
2 tbsp red wine vinegar	1 medium cucumber, chopped
1 lemon, juiced	1 cup chopped fresh herbs like mint, parsley, and/or dill
2 tsp garlic powder	½ cup crumbled feta cheese
2 cans garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained	
1 pint grape tomatoes, halved	

### Directions

In a large bowl, whisk together the oil, vinegar, lemon juice, and garlic powder. Add the rest of the ingredients to the bowl and toss to combine.

### Nutrition facts (per serving):

Calories 300; Fat 14g (Sat Fat 4g);  
Cholesterol 10mg; Sodium  
360mg; Carbs 26g; Fiber 7g;  
Sugar 6g (including 0g Added  
Sugar); Protein 9g; Vit D 2µg;  
Calcium 130mg; Iron 2mg;  
Potassium 340mg