

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
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▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH COPD

How COPD affects your body from head to toe

COPD can affect your body beyond your ability to breathe.

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a condition that affects your lungs. Even so, COPD can also affect other parts of your body. That's why keeping a consistent treatment plan — and adjusting that plan when needed — is critical. Here's where COPD complications may arise.

Your bones

Nearly 40% of people with COPD also have osteoporosis, a condition marked by brittle bones that break easily. Your doctor can suggest ways to keep bones strong, such as by taking calcium and vitamin D supplements.

Your heart

People who have COPD are at an increased risk of heart problems. Have regular checkups with your doctor to make sure your cholesterol levels and blood pressure are under control.

Your lungs

Lung infections can cause COPD flare-ups. Getting an annual flu shot can help protect you. Talk to your doctor about other ways to stay safe, such as getting the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) vaccine.

Your digestive track

At least 28% of people with COPD have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), which can worsen COPD symptoms. Avoid spicy foods and overeating.

Your mental health

Living with a chronic condition can bring up many emotions. About 40% of people with COPD experience severe depressive symptoms. Seek help if you experience symptoms.





Tai Chi: A breath of fresh air for COPD patients

This ancient practice isn't just a workout. It's a powerful tool for improving breathing and reducing stress.

Staying active is essential for managing COPD, but finding the right exercise can be tough. Tai chi, an ancient martial art, offers a gentle, low-impact way to improve breathing, strengthen the body, and ease stress — all important for COPD management.

Tai chi consists of slow, flowing movements that promote better balance, flexibility, and

cardiovascular health. "Tai chi integrates exercise with breath training and cognitive tools like heightened body awareness," says Peter M. Wayne, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. "These elements together have shown therapeutic effects, including in COPD patients."

Research shows that tai chi can lower blood pressure,

improve strength, and support lung function. It also reduces stress, which is important because anxiety can trigger breathing difficulties in COPD patients. "Many COPD patients struggle with depression and anxiety, and tai chi addresses those symptoms," Dr. Wayne explains.

Here are two simple tai chi warm-ups to try:

Tai Chi swinging

Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart. Shift your weight side to side while keeping your body relaxed. Let your arms swing naturally with the movement. Breathe deeply as you flow through the motions.

Spinal cord breathing

Stand or sit with good posture. Inhale as you gently arch your back and open your chest. Exhale as you round your back and tuck your chin. Move slowly, matching your breath to your motion.



To reach a Case Manager

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Healthy Eating Made Simple

Your inflammation-fighting shopping list

Here's what to add to your plate to help reduce inflammation and support better health.

Chronic inflammation has been linked to serious health conditions like heart disease, diabetes, and arthritis. Eating these foods can help reduce inflammation and support overall well-being.



Fatty fish. Salmon, tuna, and mackerel are rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which may help reduce inflammation.



Berries. Blueberries, strawberries, and blackberries are packed with antioxidants that combat inflammation.



Leafy greens. Spinach, kale, and Swiss chard are high in vitamins and

polyphenols, which support immune health and reduce inflammation.



Nuts. Almonds and walnuts contain healthy fats and antioxidants that may help lower inflammatory markers.



Olive oil. A staple of the Mediterranean diet, extra virgin olive oil is loaded with anti-inflammatory compounds.



Tomatoes. Rich in lycopene and vitamin C, tomatoes help fight inflammation and protect against chronic diseases.



Turmeric. This bright yellow spice contains

curcumin, a powerful anti-inflammatory compound that may help relieve joint pain.

Whole grains.



Brown rice, quinoa, and whole wheat contain fiber that supports gut health and may lower inflammation.

Green tea.



Loaded with antioxidants called catechins, green tea has been shown to reduce inflammation and support heart health.

Pair these additions to your eating plan with a balanced lifestyle that includes regular exercise, stress management, and adequate sleep for the best results.

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Recipe



Springtime Chopped Salad

Serves 4 | Prep time: 5 min
Cook Time: 10-12 min

Ingredients

2 fennel bulbs, sliced into
¼" pieces
1 teaspoon light olive oil
4-5 cups mixed greens

1 cup alfalfa sprouts
¼ cup raw almonds,
chopped
¾ small white onion, cut into
rings
1-ounce goat cheese
crumbles

Dressing:

2 ½ teaspoons light olive oil
1 tablespoon water
1 tablespoon apple cider
vinegar
¼ small white onion, grated
finely
1 teaspoon poppyseeds
½ teaspoon Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon honey

Nutrition facts Calories 154.2 | Fat 9.7 g | Saturated fat 2.3 g
Polyunsaturated fat 1.6 g | Monounsaturated fat 5.3 g | Cholesterol 5.6 mg
Sodium 131.1 mg | Fiber 5.5 g | Protein 5.4 g

Directions

1. Heat olive oil in a non-stick skillet on medium-high and stir in fennel. Cook for 10-12 minutes until lightly browned, flipping halfway through. Set aside to cool.
2. Toss fennel and salad ingredients in a large bowl, minus goat cheese.
3. Chop salad to desired texture. Whisk dressing ingredients in a separate bowl. Toss with salad.
4. Arrange in bowls and top with goat cheese and crusty wholegrain bread.