

Achieve

A Newsletter
for AvMed
Members

▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH COPD

Beyond the basics: 3 expert tips to help manage COPD

There's a lot to remember when managing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Focusing on some key things can make it easier. Exercising regularly, eating well, and taking your medicine will help you feel your best. Michael Sims, M.D., an assistant professor of clinical medicine at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine, shares three other tips to take control of your COPD.

Keep trying to quit

It's never too late to stop smoking, even if you have COPD. You can't reverse existing lung damage, but you'll still see big benefits, like a decrease in cough and mucus production.

"Most important, you will be slowing down your decline in lung function," says Dr. Sims. "It's an investment in the future." Your doctor can recommend treatments to help you quit.

Don't tough it out

You may know your way around a flare-up, but always check in with your doctor when symptoms worsen. "Sometimes people try to self-medicate at home, and they wait too long to ask for help," says

Dr. Sims. "If you're having a sudden increase in symptoms, call your doctor right away." If you are having significant difficulty breathing, call 911.

Protect yourself from respiratory infections

People with COPD are at higher risk of serious complications from pneumonia. Ask your doctor if you should get the pneumonia vaccine. If you have already had one, find out when you will be due to get another.





Why using an incentive spirometer is important

The most common test for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a spirometry test. It's painless and involves simply inhaling through a tube that's connected to a small device called a spirometer. But a spirometer isn't just a diagnostic tool. Using it regularly at home can help improve lung function.

What does an incentive spirometer do?

An incentive spirometer measures the amount of the air you inhale with a single breath. When you inhale through the spirometer, a tiny piston rises inside the device. Each line on the device

tube designates a specific amount of air.

How do you use a spirometer?

- 1. Sit up straight and tall.**
- 2. Take a deep breath** in and let it out.
- 3. Place the mouthpiece in your mouth**, with your lips completely covering the mouthpiece.
- 4. Inhale slowly**, as if

breathing through a straw. Keep the range indicator (the marker on the side chamber) in the target zone. Inhale until the piston reaches your mark.

5. Hold your breath in for 3 seconds. Then let it out.

6. Repeat as prescribed, typically about 10 times per hour.

How can using a spirometer ease COPD symptoms?

- 1. It helps you take deeper breaths** by stretching your lungs and opening your airways.
- 2. It helps expel mucus from your lungs** that often accompanies chronic coughs in COPD patients.
- 3. It helps prevent respiratory infections** by clearing out fluid in your lungs that may contribute to infections like pneumonia.

Case Manager Spotlight

Marybel Rios has been a Disease Management Case Manager with AvMed for two years.

"My favorite thing about being a Case Manager is filling gaps in health care that make a big difference in members' lives."



To reach us, please call 1-833-609-0735.



Healthy Eating Made Simple

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

Fresh vs. canned vs. frozen

Some people may think “fresh is best” when it comes to fruits and vegetables. But frozen and canned foods can be nutritious options, too. Because they have a longer shelf life than fresh produce, they're ready to use when you need them. (Just be sure to take note of the expiration dates.)

Here, we're busting some common myths about the canned and frozen food aisles.

MYTH FROZEN AND CANNED FOOD ISN'T AS HEALTHY AS FRESH FOOD.

Fact: Some frozen and canned foods have more vitamins and minerals than their fresh-food counterparts. That's because freezing and canning locks in nutrition at peak freshness. You can



search fresh food nutrient content on the USDA website (<https://fdc.nal.usda.gov>) and compare to the nutrition facts on your canned or frozen food items. Focus on iron, potassium, vitamin D, and calcium.

MYTH FROZEN AND CANNED FOOD DOESN'T TASTE AS GOOD.

Fact: Certain canned and frozen foods can lose flavor and texture. But they're

perfect for soups, stews, and more. Take canned chickpeas, for example. They aren't designed to be eaten by the handful. But when you mash them up with olive oil, tahini, and lemon juice, you've got a tasty hummus.

MYTH ALL FROZEN AND CANNED FOODS ARE ULTRA-PROCESSED.

Fact: Some canned and frozen foods contain added sodium, sugar, and saturated fat. You can shop smarter by reading the labels. Look for options that have fewer than five ingredients. Choose fruit that's canned in water or its own juice instead of syrup. Look for low- or no-sodium versions. Rinsing canned food before eating it is an easy way to reduce sodium.

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.”



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Urgent Care Center

If you think you have bronchitis, an infection, an allergic reaction, or need wound care, visit an urgent care center if your physician is unavailable. To find an in-network care center, go to **AvMed.org**.

Emergency Department

If you suspect you are having a heart attack or stroke, or you have uncontrollable bleeding, don't wait: Call **911** or go to the emergency room.