

# What to eat to live better with severe COPD



Eating well will help you control the symptoms of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). This sheet explains which foods to choose and how to prepare them.

## Why do I need a special diet?

Because of COPD, your body needs more energy to breathe. There's also a greater risk of infection. That's why you need to choose foods that are high in protein and energy. They help you:

- achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- regain strength
- strengthen your muscles
- improve your respiratory function
- strengthen your immune system
- reduce your risk of respiratory infections
- make your COPD medications more effective

## What to do if I have trouble breathing?

If you have breathing problems that make it hard for you to eat, here are some tips that can help:

- Rest before and after meals.
- Remove secretions before meals.
- Eat several meals and snacks throughout the day (small but frequent meals).
- Eat slowly, take small bites, and chew carefully.
- Take breaks during meals if needed.
- Avoid swallowing air. For example, avoid chewing gum, using a straw, and drinking carbonated beverages.
- Try to eat your meals in a relaxed atmosphere.

## What to do if I'm not hungry?

Here are a few tips to help you eat

- Eat several small meals and snacks throughout the day.
- Plan your meal times.
- Eat high-energy foods (see below).



- Drink nutritional beverages between meals as needed (see page 4).
- Season your dishes to make them more tasty. Add herbs, a little salt, pepper, etc.
- Eat when you're hungry, no matter what time it is.

Do as much exercise as you can manage. Moving makes you hungry. See the health sheet [Moving to live better with my COPD.](#)



## What should I do if I'm too tired to prepare my meals?

- Ask someone to help you.
- Cook simple meals in large quantities and freeze them in small portions.
- Buy prepared meals at the grocery store. Some offer online service and do deliveries.
- You can also use the services of a caterer or a meals-on-wheels program.

## How can I eat more protein?

Add it to all your meals. Here are some tips.

- **At breakfast, eat at least 2 of the following:**
  - Eggs cooked as you like them.
  - Peanut or almond butter: spread on bread, muffins, or bagels.
  - Nuts: add some to your yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal.
  - Milk, fortified soy milk, or skim milk powder in your coffee, cereal, or oatmeal.
  - High-fat yogurt (8-10%), plain or with nuts, cereal, or fruit.
  - Cheese: alone or with bread.



## For lunch and dinner:

- At least one serving of meat, poultry, fish, or seafood. One serving is about the size of your palm, filled to the brim.
- Add eggs to your salads, sandwiches, sauces, and soups.
- Add tofu or legumes to your soups, salads, stews, or tomato sauces.
- Add cheese to your sauces, sandwiches, salads, mashed potatoes, or omelets. Prepare dishes au gratin with cheese.



## In your snacks:

- Have milk, chocolate milk, fortified soy milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cheese, pudding, nuts, etc.

## How can I have a diet that gives me energy?

Add more fat to your diet.

- Choose whole milk with 3.25% fat, yogurt with 4%, cheese with 30% or more, etc.
- Add to your meals and recipes: oils, butter, margarine, cream, mayonnaise.
- Choose desserts that contain: whipped cream, ice cream, syrup, honey, sugar, or jam.

## Other helpful tips

- **If you use inhalers or are taking other medications with cortisone** Take in plenty of calcium and vitamin D. To do this, have dairy products with every meal or snack. You can also take supplements as needed. Talk to your doctor or nutritionist.
- **Weigh yourself often** and write down your weight in a notebook. If there are any significant changes, consult a nutritionist.

## What about supplements?

Supplements (such as Ensure, Boost, etc.) don't replace a meal. They can add to it or serve as a snack. You can also make your own nutritional drinks. See the appendix on page 4 for simple recipes you can make yourself.



## What if I need to cancel or reschedule an appointment?

Call the CHUM's appointment centre Monday to Friday between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

 514 890-8051

## Who can I call for help or to ask questions?

If necessary, ask your doctor to refer you to a nutritionist. For any health concern related to your COPD, you can call the **CHUM Patient Health Line**



### CHUM PATIENT HEALTH LINE

**514 890-8086**

**24 hours a day, 7 days a week**

You're a CHUM patient? You have questions about your health status? A nurse can help you.



### USEFUL RESOURCES

**Meals on Wheels:**  
1 877 277-2722  
[popotes.org](http://popotes.org)

**Catering services:**  
[groupepart.ca](http://groupepart.ca)

**Living well with COPD:**  
[livingwellwithcopd.com](http://livingwellwithcopd.com)

**For health sheets on COPD**, see the link below.  
Type "COPD" into the search bar.

Other CHUM health fact sheets are available. Ask your care team which fact sheets can help you.



You can also read them online.  
[chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante](http://chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante)



### Resource people and contacts


*The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
[chumontreal.qc.ca](http://chumontreal.qc.ca)

## APPENDIX: RECIPES FOR HOMEMADE NUTRITIONAL DRINKS

Pour all ingredients into blender. Blend until smooth.

### High-protein milk

#### Ingredients:

- 1 L (4 cups) whole milk (3.25% fat)
- 250 ml (1 cup) skim milk powder

You can drink it as is. It can be used as the basis for most of these recipes.



### Yogurt shake

#### Ingredients:

- 200 ml (3/4 cup) plain yogurt
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) skim milk powder
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) apple juice
- 15 ml (1 Tbsp) sugar, honey, or maple syrup



### Milk shake

#### Ingredients:

- 250 ml (1 cup) high-protein milk
- 200 ml (3/4 cup) vanilla ice cream



### Super milk shake

#### Ingredients:

- 500 ml (2 cups) **high-protein milk**
- 250 ml (1 cup) ice cream
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) liquid pasteurized eggs (NatureEgg/Naturœuf or Omega Plus)
- 90 ml (1/3 cup) wheat germ



### Eggnog

#### Ingredients:

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) **high-protein milk**
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) liquid pasteurized eggs (NatureEgg/Naturœuf or Omega Plus)
- 5 ml (1 tsp) sugar or honey



*The content of this document in no way replaces the advice of your healthcare professional.*

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal  
[chumontreal.qc.ca](http://chumontreal.qc.ca)