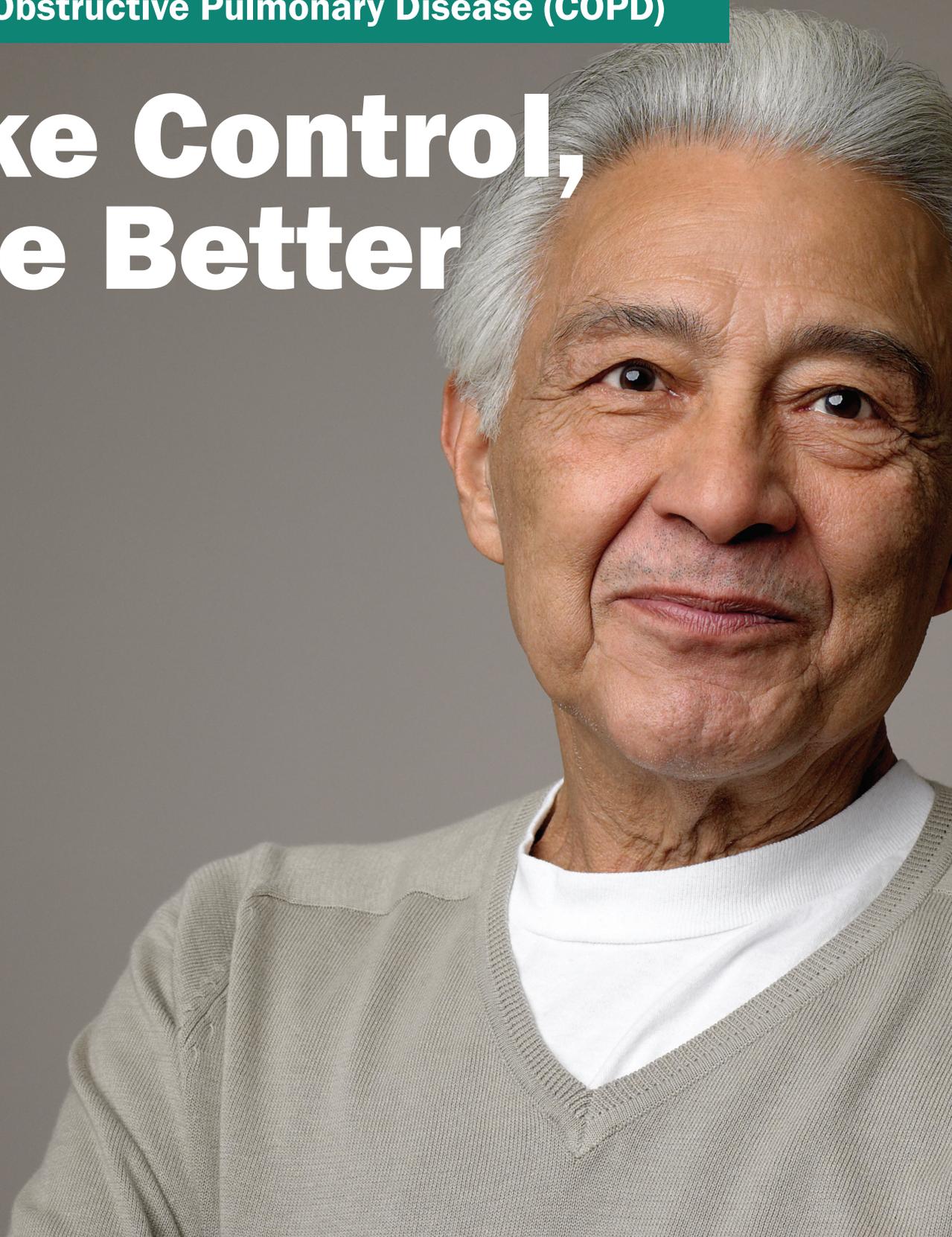


Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

# Take Control, Live Better

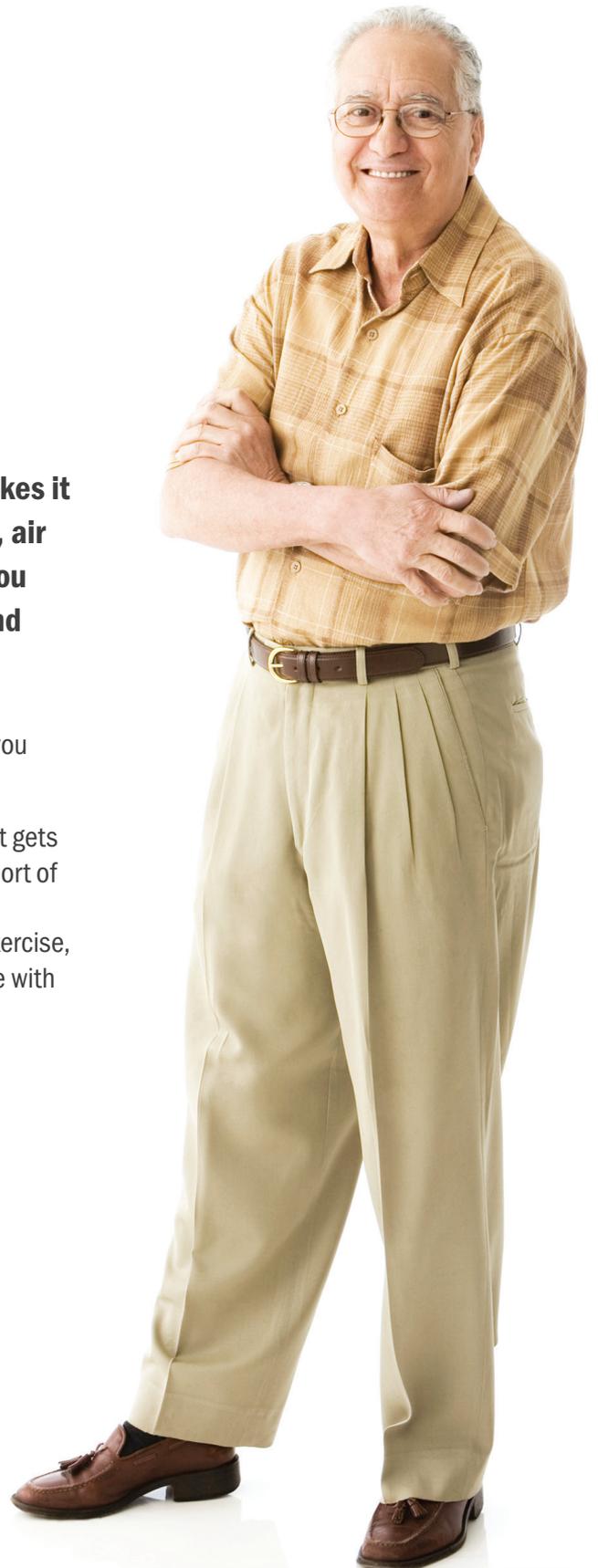


# COPD

**COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) is a long-term illness that makes it hard to breathe. When you have COPD, air doesn't flow easily out of your lungs. You may be short of breath, cough a lot, and have a lot of mucus in your airways.**

If you have emphysema or chronic bronchitis, you have COPD.

Over time, breathing problems get worse, and it gets harder to do everyday activities. You may be short of breath even when you do simple things like get dressed or fix a meal. It gets harder to eat or exercise, and breathing takes much more energy. People with COPD often lose weight and get weaker.



At times, your symptoms may suddenly get much worse. This is called a COPD flare-up or exacerbation.

A flare-up can range from mild to dangerous. The longer you have COPD, the more severe these flare-ups will be.

COPD can lead to other serious health problems, and it can be fatal. But there are ways you can make a difference in your health.

### What you can do

The best thing you can do is to stop smoking. Over time, breathing tobacco smoke irritates the airways and destroys the stretchy fibers in the lungs.

Quitting is the only sure way to slow COPD. It may be hard to quit smoking, but there are treatments that can help you succeed.

There are many other things you can do to stay as healthy as you can.

- ▶ **Take the medicines** your doctor prescribes.
- ▶ **Avoid things that can irritate your lungs**, such as smoke, pollution, and cold, dry air.
- ▶ **Take rest breaks** during the day.
- ▶ **Get regular exercise** to stay as strong as you can.
- ▶ **Eat well** so you can keep up your strength.
- ▶ **Learn special breathing techniques.** See page 11 for examples.
- ▶ **Have regular checkups.** Tell your doctor about any changes in your symptoms and whether you've had any flare-ups.

## When to call a doctor

### Call 911 if:

- ▶ You have severe trouble breathing.

### Call your doctor now if:

- ▶ You have new or worse trouble breathing.
- ▶ Your coughing or wheezing gets worse.
- ▶ You cough up dark brown or bloody mucus (sputum).
- ▶ You have a fever.

Contact your doctor if you notice more mucus or a change in the color of your mucus.

# Quitting smoking

**Quitting smoking is the most important step you can take to feel better and live longer.**

## Go to web

---

It's never too late to quit smoking. No matter how long you've smoked or how serious your COPD is, quitting smoking can help stop the damage to your lungs.

Make your plan to quit today. To get started, go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **W970** into the search box.

## Thinking about quitting?

If you're thinking about quitting, you're already on your way. It may help to know that you don't use willpower alone.

- ▶ **Treatments** can help with the physical effects of giving up smoking. These include medicines and nicotine replacement products.

- ▶ **Resources** can help with the emotional side of quitting.

Many people try several times before they quit for good. But they do succeed. And with the right help, so can you. These tips can help.

- ▶ **Set a date to quit.** Pick a time when you won't have a lot of stress in your life.

- ▶ **Change your routine.** For example, take a walk after meals instead of smoking.

- ▶ **Use medicine.** Your doctor can prescribe medicine to help with cravings and stress.

- ▶ **Try nicotine replacement products.** These include nicotine gum, lozenges, and patches. Using these products or medicine, or both, can double your chances of quitting smoking for good.

## Get support

Seek help from:

- ▶ The national tobacco quitline: 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669).
- ▶ Free smartphone or tablet apps, such as the National Cancer Institute's QuitPal.
- ▶ A text-messaging program from [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov) called SmokefreeTXT.
- ▶ Internet programs, such as [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov).
- ▶ Doctors, nurses, or therapists.



# Your plan for quitting smoking

When you want to change a habit, it helps to have a plan. Use this form to write down your ideas for making a change, getting around barriers, and finding support.

**Step 1: Think about your reason for making a change.**

What do you want to achieve? Why is it important to you? Having your own reason can help motivate you.

**My reason:**

**Step 2: Set your long-term goal.**

This is what you want to accomplish overall.

**Long-term goal:**

**Step 3: Set your short-term goals.**

Think of the small steps you can work on each week that will help you reach your long-term goal.

**Short-term goals:**

**Step 4: Plan for your barriers.**

You may already know what's going to get in the way of reaching your goal. Write down any problems that may get in your way (cost? time?), and think of ways to get around them. Use another sheet of paper if you need to.

**I think my barriers will be:**

**I can get around them by:**

**Step 5: Find support, and reward yourself.**

Who can help you meet your goals? Family? Friends? An online or community support group?

Write down some rewards you can give yourself when you meet goals. Rewards can be anything: a movie, a meal at your favorite restaurant, or an hour in the day all to yourself.

**I will get support from:**

**My rewards:**

# Treatment

**COPD can't be cured, but treatment can help you feel better and improve your overall health.**

## Go to web

---

To learn more about pulmonary rehab, go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **G298** into the search box.

## Medicines

COPD medicines reduce shortness of breath, control coughing and wheezing, and can prevent or reduce a flare-up. Most people find that medicine makes breathing easier.

COPD medicines usually come as an inhaler—a device that lets you breathe the medicine in so it goes right to your airway and lungs.

### **Be sure to use your inhaler correctly.**

If you're having trouble using an inhaler, talk to your doctor.

## Pulmonary rehab

Pulmonary rehabilitation (rehab) for COPD often combines exercise, breathing therapy, advice for eating well, and other education.

Rehab won't reverse the damage to your lungs from COPD. But it will help you to:

- ▶ Lead a more active life.
- ▶ Reduce your symptoms.
- ▶ Improve your quality of life.
- ▶ Take an active part in your treatment.
- ▶ Stay out of the doctor's office and the hospital.



## How to use a metered-dose inhaler with a spacer



After you place the inhaler into the spacer, hold the inhaler upright with the mouthpiece at the bottom.



Tilt your head back slightly, and breathe out slowly and completely.



Place the spacer's mouthpiece in your mouth.



Press down on the inhaler to spray one puff of medicine into the spacer and then start breathing in slowly (press first, then breathe in).

## Go to web

---

Want to learn more about using oxygen therapy at home? Go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **L358** into the search box.

## Oxygen therapy

At some point you may need oxygen therapy. By increasing the oxygen in your blood, this treatment helps you breathe easier and gives you more energy. It may also help you live longer and stay out of the hospital.

You can use oxygen therapy while you do daily tasks. You will probably breathe oxygen through a flexible plastic tube in your nostrils (nasal cannula).

You may use an oxygen gas tank, liquid oxygen that comes in a small container, or an oxygen concentrator. You may need oxygen only when you exercise or while you sleep. Or you may need it all the time. Work with your doctor to decide what's best for you.

## Looking ahead

Treatment for COPD is improving all the time. But COPD is a disease that keeps getting worse and can cause death. It's a good idea to talk to your doctor about what types of treatment you want if you have sudden, dangerous breathing problems.

This discussion may include writing an advance directive. This is a document that your doctor and family can use if you aren't able to speak for yourself.





# Taking care of yourself

There are a lot of things you can do to feel better and have more energy.

## Practice healthy habits

- ▶ **Eat regular, healthy meals.** See page 12 for tips.
- ▶ **Get some exercise throughout the week.** Walking is a great way to start.
- ▶ **Take short rest breaks** when you're doing chores and other activities.

## Breathe clean air at home

Some things that make your symptoms worse are out of your control. But you can make your home a place where you can breathe easier.

- ▶ Don't smoke or let anyone else smoke in your home.
- ▶ If you have air-conditioning, use it so you don't have to open the windows. Air pollution and other outdoor triggers can make your COPD worse.

- ▶ Make sure that gas appliances are vented well and have tight-fitting doors. Check flues and chimneys for cracks that could let in fumes. Don't use an open fireplace or wood-burning stove. Wood smoke is bad for your breathing.
- ▶ Don't use strong chemicals or aerosol sprays in your home. Try natural cleaners like vinegar, lemon juice, boric acid, or baking soda.
- ▶ Reduce the dust in your house as much as you can.

## Did you know?

Get the flu vaccine each fall. It can help you avoid infections that could put you in the hospital. Ask those you live and work with to do the same, so they don't get the flu and infect you. It's also a good idea to get a pneumococcal vaccine.

## Go to web

Activity and exercise can build muscle strength and endurance and help reduce shortness of breath. To learn how to exercise when you have COPD, go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **Q591** into the search box.

## Go to web

To learn about clearing your lungs, go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **T905** into the search box.

## Deal with flare-ups

Sometimes your usual shortness of breath will suddenly get worse. You may start coughing more and have more mucus.

A COPD flare-up can be life-threatening. If you have one:

- ▶ Use your quick-relief inhaler medicine first. Call your doctor if it doesn't help very much.
- ▶ If you're very short of breath, have someone take you to the emergency room. Call 911 if you have to.

Do everything you can do to avoid flare-ups and stay out of the hospital:

- ▶ Take your medicines.
- ▶ Clear mucus from your lungs.
- ▶ Stay as healthy as you can.
- ▶ Avoid "triggers" like smoke, poor air quality, and chemicals. It helps to know your triggers. You can use the chart on this page to remind yourself what to avoid. And you can write in other things that trigger flare-ups for you.

## Identify your triggers

These things may make symptoms worse:

Mark your triggers

Poor air quality, such as indoor or outdoor air pollution, smoke, or smog

Pets

Cigarette smoke

Colds, flu, bronchitis, or pneumonia

Dry, cold air

Hot, humid air

High altitudes

Fumes from cleaning products, wood stoves, or kerosene home heaters

House dust mites

Indoor mold

Not taking my medicines

Pollen

Other:

# Methods for breathing easier

## Pursed-lip breathing and breathing while bending



**Pursed-lip breathing** helps you breathe more air out so your next breath can be deeper. It makes you less short of breath and lets you exercise more.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth while almost closing your lips. Breathe in for about 2 seconds, and breathe out for 4 to 6 seconds.

You can also try **breathing while bending**. Bending forward at the waist may make it easier for you to breathe. It can reduce shortness of breath while you are exercising or resting.

## Breathing with your diaphragm



**Breathing with your diaphragm** helps your lungs expand so that they take in more air.

- ▶ Lie on your back, or prop yourself up on several pillows.
- ▶ With one hand on your belly and the other on your chest, breathe in. Push your belly out as far as you can. You should feel the hand on your belly move out, while the hand on your chest should not move. When you breathe out, the hand on your belly should move in.

Once you can do this while you're lying down, you can learn to do it while sitting or standing.

# Eating well to stay strong

**It's important to eat regular, healthy meals. Food gives you energy, including energy to breathe. You need more energy to breathe than someone who doesn't have COPD. Healthy eating also helps strengthen your immune system, which may help you avoid infections.**

## Make eating easier

Maybe you have little appetite or feel too tired to prepare meals. These tips can make eating easier and help you get the nutrition you need.

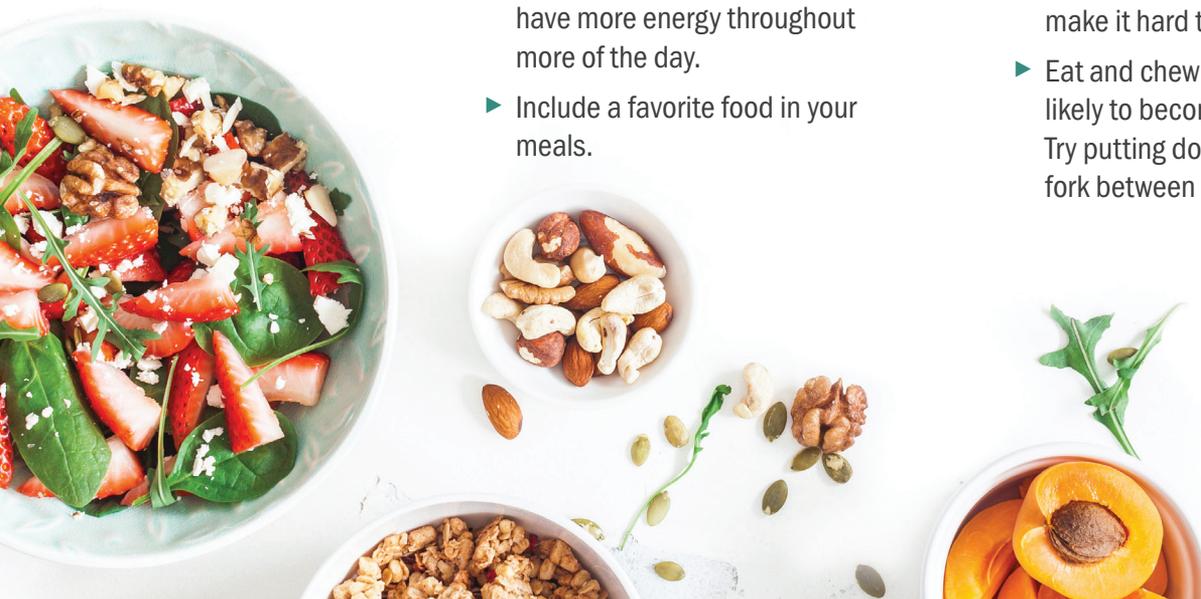
If you have other health problems that may limit the foods you can eat, talk with your doctor or a registered dietitian before making changes in your diet.

- ▶ Choose foods that are easy to prepare.
- ▶ Eat in a relaxed atmosphere.
- ▶ Avoid foods that are hard to chew.
- ▶ Eat with friends and family.
- ▶ Eat your main meal early. You'll have more energy throughout more of the day.
- ▶ Include a favorite food in your meals.

## Avoid shortness of breath

You might find it hard to eat because of breathing problems. If so, try these ideas.

- ▶ Rest before eating if eating makes you short of breath or tired.
- ▶ Eat while sitting up. This helps reduce pressure on your lungs.
- ▶ If you use oxygen, use it while eating. Eating and digestion require energy, which causes your body to use more oxygen.
- ▶ Eat six small meals a day instead of three large ones so your stomach is never extremely full. COPD may cause your lungs to push on your stomach, which can make it hard to eat a large meal.
- ▶ Eat and chew slowly so you're less likely to become short of breath. Try putting down your spoon or fork between bites.



## Adding calories to a meal or snack

### Add this:

Egg or egg yolk

Powdered milk

Cheese

Vegetable oil, olive oil,  
mayonnaise, butter, or  
sour cream

Ground-up nuts

### To this:

Meat loaf, macaroni and cheese, and similar foods. Be sure to cook the food after adding the egg.

Creamed soups, scrambled eggs, pudding, potatoes, yogurt, and casseroles

Sandwiches, crackers, casseroles, soups, toast, and pasta

Sandwiches, pasta, potatoes, rice, and gravy

Puddings, gravy, mashed potatoes, casseroles, salads, and yogurt





## Coping and support

### Go to web

---

You can help yourself feel better by changing your “self-talk”—the things you tell yourself. Negative self-talk can make you feel bad. To learn how healthy thinking can help you cope with your feelings, go to [www.healthwise.net/patiented](http://www.healthwise.net/patiented) and enter **J552** into the search box.

COPD brings big changes to your life. Coping with your feelings and seeking help when you need it can help you live better with COPD. Take some time to learn about COPD and your treatment plan. This can help you live better with the disease.

Shortness of breath can make it harder to be active. You may feel sad and lonely because you can't enjoy activities with your family and friends. These feelings are common.

It might help to know that you should be able to lead a full life, including being sexually active.

But if you have symptoms of depression, like feeling sad and hopeless much of the time, or if you're worried a lot, talk to your doctor. Depression and anxiety can be treated.

### Build a support network

Anxiety can make your symptoms worse and can cause flare-ups and make them last longer. Support from family and friends can lower anxiety and stress. You might also think about joining a COPD support group.

Ask your doctor about the types of support that are available where you live, or look for an online support group. Meeting other people with the same problems can help you know you're not alone.

# Cal's story

**“Why me?” That’s what Cal asked himself after he was diagnosed with severe COPD 5 years ago.**

“I spent the first 2 years moping around the house,” he says. “I just sat in front of the TV, feeling sorry for myself.”

Then one day Sunny, his 5-year-old granddaughter, walked up to him as he sat in his easy chair. “She looked up at me and said, ‘Poppy, why won’t you ever come outside and play with me?’”

“Well, it about broke my heart. I decided to get out of that chair and back into life. The trouble was, I couldn’t take 10 steps without getting out of breath.”

But Cal decided 10 steps was a good start. “I got on our old treadmill and walked for 1 minute that first day.”

It was hard. He had to stop twice, and he needed his oxygen. But he did it again the next day, and the next. Then he decided to see if he could add 1 minute of walking each week.

One minute grew into 5 minutes. Over time, 5 minutes turned into 15 minutes.

“That was 3 years ago,” says Cal. “Now I walk an hour around my neighborhood every day. That’s right, an hour! And without my oxygen.”

Cal thinks it helped that he increased his walking time so gradually. It kept him from getting discouraged. “I feel better than I have in years.”

And after school, Sunny and her brother come over and play with their Poppy.

This story is based on information gathered from many people with COPD.



**When you have COPD, it's important to plan ahead for what to do if your symptoms get worse. Work with your doctor to make a plan.**

## Symptom action plan

Name:

Doctor's name:

.....  
Doctor's phone number:

.....  
Other emergency contact numbers:

.....  
Next doctor visit date:

.....  
Questions for my doctor:

.....  
When should I call my doctor:

.....  
Call 911 if:

.....  
List of my medicines:

.....  
When to take my medicines:

.....  
What do I do if my symptoms get worse?

.....  
What do I need to check or keep track of? (such as peak flow and weight)

.....  
Do I need to change my diet or activities? If so, what changes do I need to make?

