

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH COPD

## Exercise With COPD? Yes, You Can!

**B**eing active is a big part of treating COPD. “Exercise increases lung capacity and builds muscle strength,” says Barbara Yawn, M.D., a spokesperson for the American Academy of Family Physicians. So get moving — and take back control of your life. Try these tips:

### **Talk to Your Doctor**

Ask how often to exercise and what activities are safe. Find out if you need oxygen during workouts and what the flow rate should be. Learn to know when it’s time to stop.

### **Clear the Air**

Smoggy, polluted air? Exercise indoors to reduce breathing problems.

### **Start Smart**

Set your pace with the talk test: You want to be able to have a conversation as you move.

### **Pace Your Breathing**

To keep from feeling out of breath, close your mouth, inhale through your nose, then exhale as if blowing

out a candle. Breathe in slowly for two seconds, out for four seconds.

### **Keep It Simple**

Walk until you’re short of breath. Rest for three minutes. Check your pace with the talk test (see “Start Smart,” left).

### **Rest Between Sets**

Alternate between upper- and lower-body strength moves with a break between sets.



# Your COPD Guide to Lung Tests

**T**rouble catching your breath? Coughing and wheezing? If you've got COPD, you know what it's like. More than 16 million Americans have it, and while there's no cure, there are good treatments that can help you keep doing things you enjoy.

To monitor your condition, your doctor might order these tests:

## Pulmonary Function Tests

These measure how well your lungs work. The most common one is called **spirometry**. You blow into a mouthpiece attached to a machine that measures your airflow.

## Imaging Tests

**Chest x-rays** can help diagnose pneumonia and bronchitis, which often cause flare-ups.



**Computed tomography (CT) scans** can reveal enlarged arteries in your lungs and rule out other diseases, including congestive heart failure.

## Lab Tests

Your doctor may order an **arterial blood gas test** to see how well your lungs move oxygen into your blood and carbon dioxide out. A **pulse oximetry** test shows the amount of oxygen in your blood.

## Exercise Capacity Tests

These tests can help doctors understand your physical limitations (if any). A **cardiopulmonary exercise test (CPET)** measures your heart rate, blood pressure and oxygen levels while you're walking on a treadmill or riding a bike.

During the **six-minute walk**, you'll walk about 10 yards as your doctor monitors your oxygen levels.

## We're Here for You

Your Case Manager can connect you to the resources you need. Just 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.

### 7 Ways to Break a Salt Habit

**H**ealthy eating is all about balance, especially when it comes to sodium (aka salt). It keeps your fluid levels just right and helps transmit electrical signals throughout your nervous system. But too much can make you retain water, raise blood pressure, contribute to heart disease and stroke, and damage your kidneys or liver.

Here are my seven favorite strategies for eating less salt. Try a couple of them each week. Done consistently, they can have a big impact. After a few weeks, you won't miss the shaker!

**1** Eat more fresh fruits and veggies. They're naturally low in sodium

and loaded with nutrients. Choose frozen veggies with no added sauce.

**2** Say no to processed foods like ramen noodles, macaroni-and-cheese kits, and packaged frozen dinners.

**3** Buy fresh meats and avoid processed ones like bacon, lunch meats, and hot dogs — they're super high in sodium.

**4** Cook creatively. Instead of using salt, try a squeeze of lemon or lime juice or a splash of vinegar. Experiment with new spices and herbs.

**5** Choose lower-sodium condiments. They may have up to 96% less sodium than regular varieties. Read food labels to find low-sodium options.

**6** Be smart when you eat out. Restaurant portions can be huge — and high in sodium. So cut your salt and calories in half by sharing a plate with a friend or taking half your dinner home. Ask your server how dishes have been prepared and see if the chef can cook your meal with less salt. If your entrée comes with sauce, request it on the side, then use it sparingly.

**7** Snack wisely. Try to just say no to chips and pretzels. Instead, reach



for dried fruit or lower-sodium cheeses. Longing for something crunchy? Try fresh fruit or veggies, like a carrot or an apple. You'll be glad you did.

## When Times Are Tough, We're Here to Help

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Register or log in at **AvMed.org**

AvMed is committed to helping all Members feel their best physically — and emotionally.

**Through our partnership with Optum Behavioral Health**, we can lead Members to the right resources for mental

health support as well as substance use concerns. Members can choose from more than 8,600 Florida-based psychiatrists, psychologists, and other mental health counselors.

Members can even download **Sanvello**, an

app that can share strategies for dialing down symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression — anytime. These powerful tools are there for Members whenever symptoms come up.

More information is available at **AvMed.org**.

Health and wellness or prevention information.