

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH COPD

### 3 essential health checks to get this year

**G**et a head start on the new year by scheduling these appointments to help you manage your chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).

#### 1. Primary care visits

Visit your primary care provider (PCP) at least once a year. "Patients who have frequent exacerbations should be seen quarterly or more frequently," says pulmonologist Diego J. Maselli, M.D.

During these visits, your PCP will ask about your symptoms, check your vital signs (like blood pressure), and review your medications and care plan.

Another time to check in with you PCP? After

an emergency room or hospital visit. Follow up with your PCP within seven days of going back home.

#### 2. Breathing tests

Also called pulmonary function tests (PFTs), these tests measure how well your lungs are working. "PFTs provide information regarding the severity of the disease and may help determine if you qualify for advanced therapies," says Dr. Maselli. PFTs include:

- **Spirometry:** How much air you breathe in and out.

- **Lung volume test:** How much air your lungs hold
- **Diffusing capacity test:** How well your lungs transfer oxygen to your blood
- **Exercise tests:** How your lungs respond to exercise

#### 3. Dental exams

Research has found that regular dental cleanings are connected to fewer COPD flare-ups and an improved quality of life. Experts recommend a dental cleaning and exam every six months.





## How to protect yourself from other lung diseases

**I**f you're living with COPD, you know how important it is to manage your symptoms every day. Yes, those measures help you breathe easier. But they're necessary for another reason too: COPD can also increase your risk of other lung problems, such as pneumonia, lung cancer, and more.

Try these tips to help keep your lungs as healthy as possible.

### **Track your symptoms.**

Writing down your symptoms can help you notice new changes that could be worth sharing

with your provider. "Changes might be a sign of a COPD exacerbation, pneumonia, a viral infection, or something else," says Shyam Kapadia, M.D., a pulmonologist with Lee Health, based in Fort Myers, Florida.

### **Get vaccinated.**

With COPD, you're more prone to viral respiratory

infections. And those can lead to worsening symptoms and complications. Vaccines are one of the best ways to protect yourself. Talk to your doctor about vaccines for COVID-19, flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), pertussis (whooping cough), and pneumonia.

### **Quit smoking or stay quit.**

Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your lung health. Talk to your doctor if you're struggling to kick the habit. He or she can recommend resources to help.

You'll also want to ask your doctor if you should get screened for lung cancer. "Smoking goes hand in hand with lung cancer and COPD," says Dr. Kapadia. Screening can detect it early, before you have any symptoms, when it's easier to treat.

### **Case Manager Spotlight**

**Latricia Campbell** has been a Disease Management Case Manager with AvMed for two years.

"I enjoy being a Case Manager because I am able to assist our Members and make a difference in their wellbeing."



**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.

### Save time and money with these go-to healthy foods



**C**onvenience foods often get a bad rap. You may think they're less healthy. Or they come with a higher price tag. But there are lots of packaged foods that hit the sweet spot: They're nutritious, low-cost, and easy. Here are some of my favorites:

**Greek yogurt:** Protein is often the most expensive part of your diet. But Greek yogurt is a great low-cost option that provides about 12 to 15 grams of protein

per serving. Individual cups are convenient for a grab-and-go breakfast.

**Peanut butter:** Another low-cost protein, peanut butter is also packed with good-for-you fats that will keep you full and satisfied. Other nut butters, like almond and cashew, are trendy, but they aren't any healthier. Save money by sticking with old-fashioned peanut butter.

**Bananas:** Whole fruits, like bananas, aren't technically

packaged foods, but they're just as convenient! And at about 25 cents apiece, you can't beat the price. Keep them on hand for breakfast, snacks, or an easy addition to a meal.

#### **Precooked grains:**

Whole grains are better for your health, but they take a long time to cook. Plain, precooked grains, like brown rice and quinoa, are a great shortcut without sacrificing nutrition.

Remember, when shopping for packaged foods, always check nutrition labels and compare prices. Watch out for sodium and added sugars, which can be higher in packaged foods. And you don't have to be brand loyal — choose whichever product has the lowest price with similar nutrients and ingredients.

#### **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."



## Recipe



## Salsa rice and beans

Serves 6 | Prep time: 40 minutes

This is a great recipe to have on hand for busy weekdays. Leftovers are also delicious topped with a fried egg.

### Ingredients

- 1 cup brown rice
  - 1 (15-ounce) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
  - $\frac{3}{4}$  cup jarred salsa
  - 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  cups vegetable broth
- Optional for garnish: finely chopped fresh cilantro or parsley

### Instructions:

1. Combine rice, beans, salsa, and broth in a 3- to 4-quart saucepan; bring mixture to a boil.
2. Cover, reduce heat to low, and gently simmer until rice is cooked through, about 40 minutes. Remove lid and fluff with a fork. Serve with extra salsa and chopped herbs, if desired.

### Nutrition facts

Calories 175 | Fat 1g (Sat Fat 0g) | Cholesterol 0mg | Sodium 35mg | Carbs 35g | Fiber 4g | Sugar 2g (inc. 0g Added Sugar) | Protein 6g | Vit D 0 $\mu$ g | Calcium 35mg | Iron 1mg | Potassium 295mg