



Eating well is important for lung health and overall health. Food provides fuel to all parts of the body so that they can work properly, including the lungs.

How can we eat well?

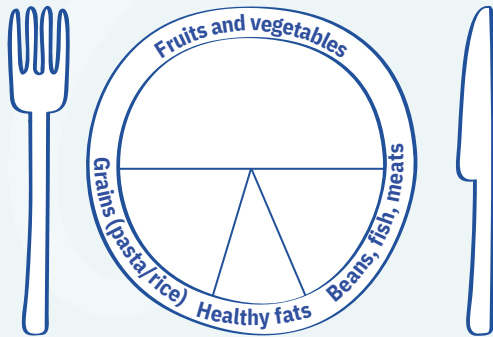
Just like a car, if we put the wrong type of fuel into our body, then it will not work as well.

Top tips for eating well for healthy lungs:



1 Eat a variety of food

We need to eat a mixture of foods as they provide different nutrients that our body needs. Some food groups, we need more of, such as fruit and vegetables.



2 Eat the colours of the rainbow

Eating a variety of colourful fruit and vegetables as part of a balanced diet.

3 Limit foods high in fat, salt and sugar






Try to limit these types of foods to no more than once per day and not every day. These foods may increase the risk of asthma and wheezing and reduce your body's chance of fighting off infections.

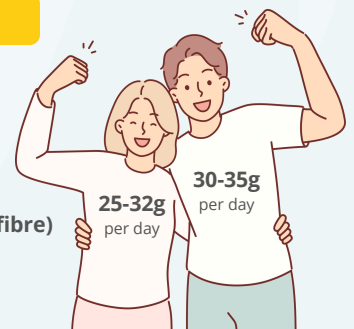


Too much salt has also been linked with high blood pressure. You can lower salt in your diet by choosing low-salt or no-added salt options and use herbs and spices to add flavours to food.

4 Eat more fibre

When you eat a lot of fibre, you are less likely to develop lung conditions over the course of your life.

-  2 slices of wholemeal bread (**6.6g of fibre**)
-  A jacket potato (**4.7g fibre**)
-  Handful of almonds (**3.8g fibre**)
-  2-3 tablespoons of wholegrain rice (**2.7g fibre**)
-  1 apple (**2.4g fibre**)



European dietary guidelines recommendations

5 Find the right balance

Your breathing system has to work harder and you increase your chance of developing some lung conditions.



Eating more than your body needs can lead to your body storing excess weight.



You are not getting enough energy and you are more at risk of infections and breathing difficulties.

Eating less than your body needs can lead to being underweight.



Building on the basics



Higher levels of vitamin D have been linked with better lung health.



People with lung conditions like asthma and COPD often have low vitamin D. Our bodies make vitamin D from sunlight, and it is also found in foods like oily fish and eggs. In places with little sunlight, especially in winter, it is a good idea to take a vitamin D supplement and choose foods that are high in vitamin D.

Support breastfeeding

What we eat as a baby is important for lung development. Breastfeeding can help reduce lung infections and support healthy lung growth in childhood and into the teenage years.



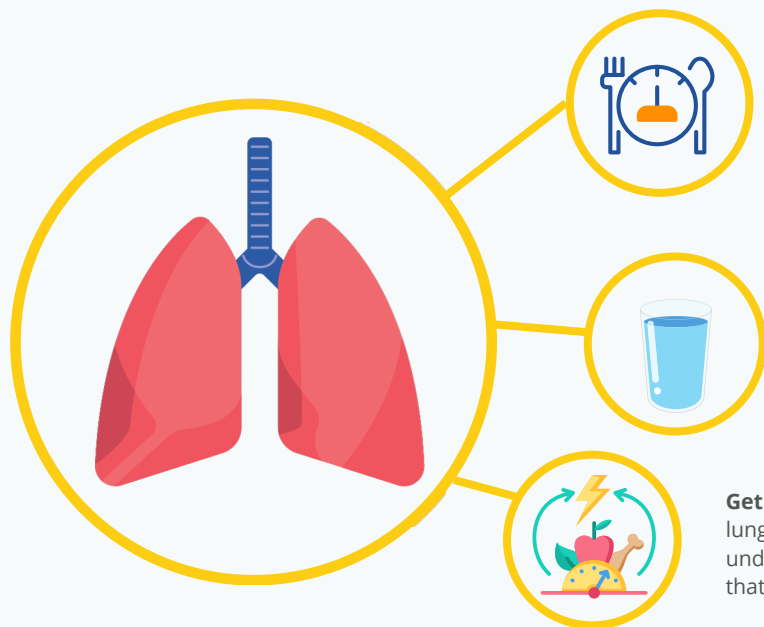
Keeping your gut healthy

We can keep our gut healthy by eating lots of fibre, along with probiotics (found in yoghurt and sauerkraut) and prebiotics (found in wholegrains, bananas, garlic). When we have a balance of healthy bacteria in the gut and the lungs, it can reduce swelling (inflammation) in the lungs, which is often the cause of wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain and coughing.



Eating well with a lung condition

There is not one set diet plan that will be helpful for all and it is important to follow the advice of your healthcare professional, or a dietician, before making any specific changes.



Boost your immune system to lower your chance of infection. You can do this through a balanced diet, maintaining a healthy weight and getting a mixture of vitamins and minerals including vitamins A, C, D and E and zinc.

Drink plenty of water to help thin the mucus in the lungs and keep it moving, lowering your chance of infection. Sipping water in small amounts, can also help with dry mouth if you experience this.

Get the right amount of energy from food if you live with a lung condition, like COPD. This is important to avoid being underweight. Try eating small amounts often, and avoiding foods that trigger bloating, if this feeling prevents you from eating well.

Your healthcare provider or dietician can recommend specific diet information for you to ensure you are getting the energy and nutrients you need from food.

This document was produced with the aim of teaching the public about a healthy diet to maintain healthy lungs and to help healthcare professionals explain the benefits of good nutrition. It was produced by the European Lung Foundation (ELF) as part of the Healthy Lungs for Life campaign, with the support of the ELF patient network, the ERS Health and Environment Committee and healthcare professionals Megan Jensen and Neil Williams.

For further reading and to access references for this information, please visit:
www.europeanlung.org/en/information-hub/keeping-lungs-healthy/nutrition/



HEALTHY LUNGS FOR LIFE

