

**BREATHE
FREELY**

WHY ARE HEALTHY LUNGS IMPORTANT?

Your guide to looking after your lungs

HOW CAN I LOOK AFTER MY LUNGS?



Being more active

Even 10 minutes a day can make all the difference



Eating a balanced diet

Help with making healthier choices where you can



Stopping smoking

This is not easy but the right support is out there



Making sure you have your vaccinations

If you have a long term condition or are over 65 years old



Early help with treatment and management

Knowing the warning signs and symptoms of lung conditions, including Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) and lung cancer

There is plenty more advice in this booklet and it is just as important if you already have a lung condition.

With help and support you can manage your condition and help improve your overall lung health, even by making small changes.

For more information if you are living with a lung condition visit;

Call the British Lung Foundation helpline on 03000 030 555 or visit www.blf.org.uk

For information on Health A-Z - Lung and airway conditions visit www.nhs.uk



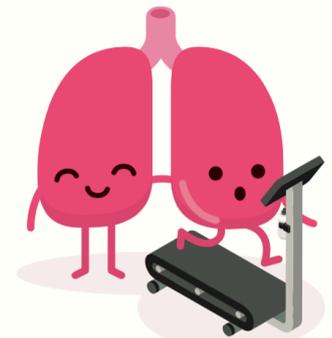
HOW CAN BEING MORE ACTIVE HELP MY LUNGS?

Being active is one of the best things you can do to take care of your lungs.

Not only does it make your lungs feel stronger and help deliver oxygen better throughout your body, it can also help reduce your risk of long-term lung conditions such as COPD. Being active can help you to control your weight also. This is important and can affect your lung function.

Sounds good? All you need to do is find the right level of physical activity for you to feel the positive effects throughout your life...

It doesn't have to be too difficult:



Increasing your activity levels can:

- give you more energy
- lower high blood pressure
- strengthen the muscles you use to breathe
- strengthen your heart and improve circulation
- reduce the risk of conditions like arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, stroke and cancer
- reduce your risk of falling by improving your strength and balance
- reduce stress levels and help to reduce anxiety and depression.

! Remember: Even small amounts of physical activity will be of benefit. Start by trying to do more than you usually do. This could be:

- Getting off the bus a stop earlier and walk a bit further
- Using the stairs rather than a lift or escalator
- Trying to walk more when going on short journeys
- Doing some gardening or DIY.

! Remember: If you are not used to being active:

- 150 minutes a week may seem too much. Just try your best to be as active as possible and slowly build this up at a steady pace, only doing activities you feel comfortable with. If you feel you need further advice before doing this, you can talk to your GP.
- You should avoid doing any vigorous activity at first, where you breathe hard and fast and struggle to say more than a few words without pausing for breath.



HOW CAN EATING A BALANCED DIET HELP MY LUNGS?

A balanced diet is very important for everybody. The essential nutrients in healthy foods and fluids can help you to feel as fit as you can. This is especially important if you have an existing lung condition as it helps to prevent infections and keep your lungs as healthy as possible.

Eating a balanced diet, as well as being active will also help you to maintain a healthy weight. This is really important for your lung health as being overweight can make your breathing more difficult, making it harder for you to be active.

Ways in which to improve your diet:



Try to replace snacks with fruit and add vegetables to meals where possible aiming to eat 5 portions each day



Choose low fat dairy products, but be careful as these can be high in sugars



Try to replace eating red meat with more lean meats, including skinless chicken, turkey and fish. You can also have red meat with fat trimmed off, which is healthier



Choose wholegrain carbohydrates where possible including wholemeal bread, rice and pasta



Try to lower your salt intake by not adding salt at the table and reducing the amount you add to food when cooking, so that you have no more than one teaspoon of salt a day



Try to drink water regularly throughout the day. Remember that many drinks have sugar in them, even when it says 'no added sugar'



Try to avoid sugar and sugary foods



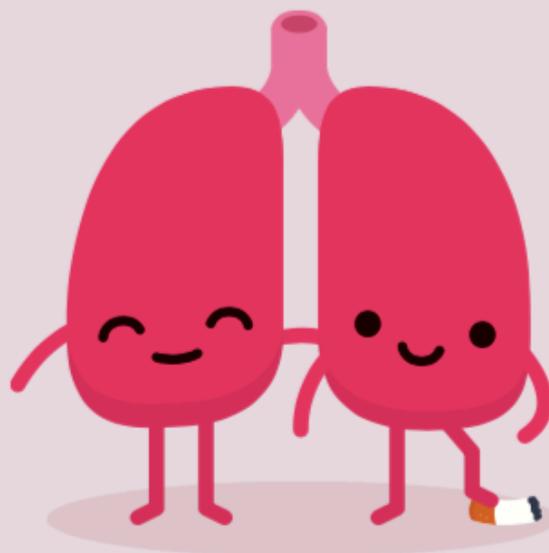
HOW DOES BECOMING SMOKEFREE HELP MY LUNGS, NO MATTER HOW LONG I'VE SMOKED?

You may think that if you already smoke tobacco cigarettes or other products such as shisha that there is no point in stopping smoking as the damage to your lungs is already done.

However, the best thing you can do is stop now and you can still make a difference to your lung health. You can slow down the damage that smoking causes to your lungs and ease your symptoms. Here are some examples of how smoking can damage your lungs:

- Your airways become inflamed
- Your large airways will produce more mucus, which can cause you to have a chronic cough and produce phlegm most of the time
- Continuing to smoke can mean you become very short of breath, even at rest.

Becoming smokefree is not easy, but there are lots of local services available to offer the right support that will help you to quit smoking, this time for good. Even if you have not been successful before, it's important that you saw the need to try. Remember, each quit attempt is a step further towards becoming smokefree.





WHAT VACCINATIONS SHOULD I HAVE TO HELP MY LUNGS?

Flu (influenza) and pneumonia vaccinations



Who's it for?

If you are 65 or over or have a long-term condition (particularly a lung condition).



What do they do?

Flu can lead to chest infections or even pneumonia, especially if you have a lung condition.

This annual injection protects you against flu for one year, but does not protect against colds and other viruses. The pneumonia injection protects you against the most common kind of pneumonia and is a one off injection.

For more advice about these vaccinations please ask your pharmacist.





WHAT SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR?

Recognising the signs of a lung condition early on can be helpful.

It means you are more likely to be able to treat it earlier and in more serious cases such as lung cancer, increase chances of survival.

Common symptoms you can look out for:

Having a cough most of the time, that lasts for 3 weeks or more

A change in a cough that you have had for a long time

Weight loss

Loss of appetite

Being more breathless than usual and increasing breathlessness when exercising and moving around

Chest tightness

An ache or pain in the chest or shoulder

Frequent chest infections

Coughing up blood

Hoarseness

Wheezing

If I notice a problem what should I do?

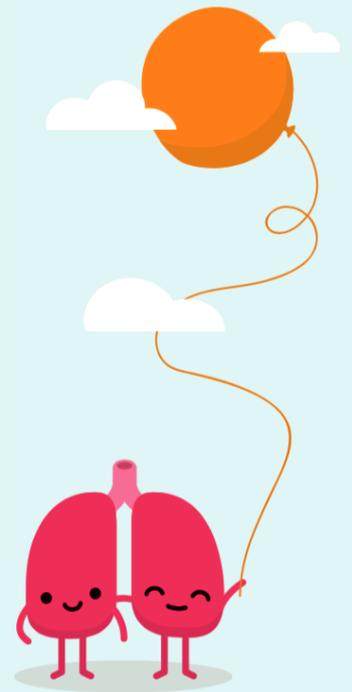
If you need help or advice ask your pharmacist.

If you are worried about any of the symptoms above ask your pharmacist and they may signpost you for further advice if needed.

Support from your local pharmacy

What advice can your local pharmacy give you?

- If you have any breathing symptoms your pharmacy can advise you and signpost you if needed
- Pharmacies can give you advice on how to improve your health and well-being, such as ways to improve your diet
- You may be entitled to a free NHS flu vaccination and your pharmacy can do this or help you find a service near you
- Many pharmacies are waiting to offer their support to help you quit smoking



What medication is available?

Nicotine replacement therapy, otherwise known as 'NRT', comes in all shapes and sizes and helps to reduce symptoms so you can give up smoking more easily.

You can get patches, gum, nose and mouth sprays, all of which release nicotine into your bloodstream without you needing to smoke. As well as NRT, there are two other stop smoking medications available on the NHS to help you quit. These include Varenicline, also known as Champix and Bupropion, also known as Zyban. Studies have shown that both of these have high success rates in helping people give up.

Remember though that you'll still need some will power to kick the habit.

You can get NRT and other stop smoking medications from a number of places including FagEnds. This service can provide vouchers for licensed and regulated medication like NRT and referrals to your GP for Champix with on-going support. They can also offer you support if you're looking to give up e-cigarettes, as well as traditional tobacco, and can help guide you towards a healthier, smoke and nicotine free lifestyle.

You can also be prescribed NRT through your GP and local pharmacies offer free vouchers for nicotine patches, gum and oral strips if you don't pay for prescriptions. If you do you'll only need to pay the prescription charge.