

Community Health Newsletter

Week Twelve



L: Healthy Lungs



Lungs work a lifetime taking in air, transferring oxygen to the blood, and removing toxic gases. Protect your lungs and those of your children.

- Avoid secondhand smoke and asbestos.
 - Use non-toxic cleaning and paint products indoors.
 - Avoid fumes and dust.
 - Control dust by vacuuming often and keeping the house and car clean.
- Keep your home and car well ventilated, and control humidity.
 - Avoid the use of pesticides and chemicals outdoors.
 - Stay inside on high ozone days.

Have your home checked for radon, an odorless, colorless cancer-causing gas that is present in many homes and a recognized cause of lung cancer.

Proper breathing techniques, exercise, a healthy diet, good posture, and tobacco avoidance are important for healthy lungs.

Exercise improves lung function and helps increase lung capacity. Many people do not realize they do shallow or upper chest breathing. Shallow breathing utilizes only the top half of the lungs. Lungs can be strengthened through slow, deep breaths that fill and empty the lungs completely.

While the National Cancer Institute notes that studies show that eating a lot of fruits or vegetables may help lower the risk of lung cancer, diet and exercise cannot reverse damage caused by unhealthy behaviors like using tobacco or exposure to tobacco smoke.

ACTIVITY TIP

Deep breathing will not only strengthen lungs but aid in relaxation and stress relief, according to Dr. Andrew Weil in his book *Eight Weeks to Optimum Health*. Do breathing exercises in an unpolluted area.

Try sitting quietly, back straight, and breathe while counting to four slowly. Hold for four counts and then try to breathe out for eight counts.

Lie flat on your back and interlock your fingers at the base of your ribs. Inhale allowing your belly to rise. Inhale steadily and deeply, but without straining. Then exhale without straining, watch your fingers fall with your belly and rib cage. Continue for five minutes.

Tip Of The Week: Aerobic exercise will help build lung capacity

Lungs mature by age 20–25 years; then aging brings a progressive decline in lung function. Maximum oxygen consumption peaks between 20 to 30 years of age; then declines by a rate of about 1% per year depending upon individual level of physical activity (declining more in sedentary compared with physically active adults).

Respiratory muscle strength decreases with age and can impair effective cough, which is important for airway clearance. This is why the death rate is so much higher for seniors contracting respiratory diseases.

People tend to eat fewer fruits and vegetables in the winter, but everyone needs at least five servings of fruits and vegetables every day to get adequate vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants. Oranges and other citrus fruits are usually cheaper in the winter, so cold and flu season is the perfect time to stock up on these fruits.

Fruit Dip Recipe:

8 ounces yogurt, low fat vanilla
2 Tablespoons 100% orange juice
1 Tablespoon lime juice
1/2 Tablespoon brown sugar
2 apples - cored and sliced
1 pear - cored and sliced
1 orange - seeded and sliced

Instructions:

1. In a small bowl, combine yogurt, orange juice concentrate, lime juice and brown sugar.
2. Mix well.
3. Place bowl containing dip on a large plate and surround with fresh fruit slices.

Source: SNAP–Ed Connection

