Enjoy July 4th Events With COPD

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How to Balance Precaution and Participation at Your July 4th Events with COPD

COPD can dampen your spirits if you don't prepare well for the event. Fun and festivities can leave you breathless before you know it, and too much indulging can affect your comfort and energy. But that's no reason to skip out on the Independence Day celebration altogether, so join the party without risking an unpleasant episode or respiratory discomfort with some simple tips and precautions.

Why Smart Food Choices Help Control COPD Symptoms

Wholesome food will benefit more than just your waistline. When you maintain a healthy weight, your muscles use oxygen more efficiently, which means you can do more with less breath. Since breathlessness is a common occurrence when you suffer from COPD, you need to take some measures to make things easier for your lungs, heart and muscles, and your diet is a great place to begin.

Evidence suggests that a high carb diet can produce more carbon dioxide in the body, which means more work for your lungs. On the other hand, brightly colored produce – think purple, red and green – has plenty of antioxidants to reduce inflammation in your muscles and tissue. Add some beans and legumes for zinc (which can help to reduce COPD symptoms), and you will begin to feel much more comfortable every day.

Tips for Safe Indulging

When you deny yourself all the things you enjoy, you're bound to overindulge when you do give into your cravings. Instead, use portion control and balance when the party starts:

- **Balance sugary or alcoholic beverages with plenty of water.** Alcohol will initially stimulate your body, but it can also depress your respiratory system and contribute to breathlessness. If you do imbibe, sip slowly and stagger each alcoholic drink with at least one full glass of water. Water helps to thin mucus, making it easier to clear out of your lungs.
- **Go easy on salty dishes.** Sodium can lead to fluid retention, which can be dangerous for COPD patients taking steroids, and those who suffer from high blood pressure or heart problems. Try to avoid chips, pretzels and processed meats, and devote at least half your plate to dishes that are low in sodium.
- **Choose fruit over cake.** Preservatives, fat and refined sugar can combine to cause headaches, sluggishness and inflammation, all of which work against your respiratory health. On the other hand, fresh fruit is a wonderful way to get a little extra water, vitamins and minerals from your meal.
- **Don't overeat.** An uncomfortably full belly can push on your diaphragm and divert all your energy to digesting, which makes breathing painful and uncomfortable. Resist the urge to load your plate with a lot of food at once, and try not to eat right where the food is being served.

COPD can be isolating, but when you find ways to strengthen your body as you fight your symptoms, you'll find you can comfortably participate in most activities. However, it can be easy to overextend yourself, so be sure to

pack your rescue inhaler, oxygen and any other meds you take for your symptoms. Rest when you need it, so you can enjoy the party for longer!