Live a Little: Dining Out With COPD

by YVONNE BANKS

Don’t Let Your COPD Stop You From Enjoying Life

Many people with COPD often feel that they cannot get out and enjoy life because of their condition. They tire easily and it is difficult for them to do any activity without feeling wiped out. People afflicted with COPD find that they have to cut their activities short, and this can be embarrassing for them.

Planning ahead

If you have friends that frequently ask you to dine with them, with a little planning ahead, you can join them for a meal that is pleasant for you. There are some things to consider when you make plans to dine out. Follow these tips to help you make it through a meal out without experiencing early fatigue:

- **Plan to go early.** Aim to dine before the rush. You won’t feel hurried and it should allow you to relax during the meal. You will also not be apt to eat too quickly and accidently swallow air, which leads to discomfort.
- **Check the weather.** Try to head outdoors when the humidity is low. Check the local forecast to make sure conditions will not aggravate your COPD symptoms.
- **Arrange your bath schedule.** Bathing can be physically taxing; getting this done the night before you go out will give you that much more energy the next day.
- **Make reservations.** Calling ahead for reservations will be one less item to worry about.
- **Get someone to chauffeur you.** Have the person taking you to dinner pick you up and drop you off at your front door so that you do not need to walk as far. If possible, have them take you in a wheelchair if there is a bit of distance from where the car is parked and the restaurant.

- **Ask for specific seating.** Ask the restaurant staff for a table near the door and/or bathroom. You’ll also want to find a seat where the temperature doesn’t fluctuate a lot.
- **Don’t overeat.** Eating too much could cause discomfort and make it more difficult to breathe.
- **Order small.** Ask for smaller portions or order off of the senior citizens’ menu. Otherwise, plan to eat half of the entrée and take the rest of it home.
- **Avoid troublesome foods.** If you have a tendency to get heartburn, stay away from caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, and foods high in fat.
- **Consume healthy protein.** Sources of protein like chicken, fish, or other lean choices are good choices for your condition. Protein is needed for optimal healing of the body’s tissues.
- **Eat slowly.** Don’t rush the meal. Take your time and enjoy every minute with your companion.