

# Inspiration

Summer 2007

*A newsletter for people with COPD and those who love them*



## Eating Better to Feel Better



### How can you eat better? Try these tips:

- Eat a variety. Lean meats, vegetables, fish and grains can be easy to prepare and delicious without adding empty calories, cholesterol or salt.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Avoid caffeine and alcohol, as they can dehydrate and interfere with medications.
- To save money, buy store brands and products on sale. In-season produce can be very economical.
- Plan meals in advance to make shopping easier. You'll have everything you need when it's time to cook.
- Make double batches and freeze leftovers so your efforts go further.
- Limit salt, as it can make you retain water and make breathing more difficult. Use herbs or salt-free seasonings instead.
- Don't overeat, and avoid foods that cause bloating such as soda, fried or spicy foods, and some vegetables including beans, broccoli, cabbage and onions. Gas can make breathing difficult.
- If you use oxygen, wear your cannula while eating. Eating and digestion use energy, and your body needs the extra oxygen.

When you are managing COPD, food can make a difference. Food is your fuel—eating well gives you more energy for everything from breathing to exercise, helps you maintain a healthy weight and aids in fighting infection.

When you have COPD, it takes ten times as many calories just to power your breathing. If you're underweight or undereating, you may feel too tired to do much of anything. Your doctor can help determine how many calories you need every day.

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# Inspirations

FROM THE EDITOR

## Is Your Waistline Holding You Back?



If you call getting out of bed and walking to the kitchen “exercise,” you’re not moving around enough. In addition to helping you feel your best, a healthy weight can lower your risk of other diseases that go hand-in-

hand with COPD.

Extra weight around the belly can raise your chances of getting heart disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and cancer. Being overweight can make you more short of breath, especially if you have COPD. It can also lead to breathing problems while you sleep (including sleep apnea), leaving you more fatigued than COPD alone.

On the other hand, drastic weight loss can also be a problem, especially for those with emphysema. Being less active can cause a loss of muscle mass, including the muscles that help you breathe. You may feel weaker and become more prone to infection.

If you’re overweight or underweight, your respiratory muscles may not be as strong or work as effectively as they should. But in either case—and if your weight is normal—it’s incredibly important to get active and stay active.

Of course, this is easier said than done.

A great way to get started is through a pulmonary rehabilitation group exercise program. The group setting provides support and holds you accountable, and you’ll have medical staff caring for your safety and health. Once you gain confidence, you may be able to do some exercises at home. Find out more about pulmonary rehab on page 6.

In addition to being active, make sure you’re eating well. If you need to lose weight, try to avoid fatty, greasy and fast food, and eat smaller, more frequent meals. If you’re underweight, focus on higher-calorie, nutritious foods. Read about eating healthy on page 1.

Remember, your goal isn’t just to lose weight, but to breathe easier, avoid other health problems and feel better in everything you do.

Yours in lung health,

**Peter H.S. Sporn, MD**

*Associate Professor of Medicine*

*Director, Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine Fellowship Program  
Feinberg School of Medicine, Northwestern University*

### **A new name. An old friend. A Familiar Mission.**

Did you notice our new name and logo? As of July 1, 2007, we changed our name from American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago to Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago. We are no longer affiliated with American Lung Association. Our staff, location and commitment to the COPD community remains the same.

Keep this magnet to remember our new name and call us anytime. We’re here to help.

# Safe, Simple Cleaning



Flowers are in bloom and the days are long and hot. That can only mean one thing...it's summer! With windows wide open for fresh air, a little more dust and dirt come in with each summer breeze. With these possible triggers, it's a good time to get things cleaned up.

If you have COPD, even the thought of cleaning can leave you breathless. So before you get started, read these tips for a safe and productive cleaning day.

- **Ask friends and family to help.** Turn on the music, serve lemonade, and make a fun day of it. Before you know it, you'll be done.



- **Get the right tools.** For hard-to-reach places, buy a sturdy step stool or an extension "gripper."
- **Avoid harsh chemicals.** Many common cleaning products contain substances that can irritate your lungs. If you must use them, follow the label instructions carefully and inhale them as little as possible.
- **Wear a dust mask.** Dust is a serious lung irritant. Get an inexpensive dust mask at your local hardware store.
- **Use a cart.** Save a few steps by keeping all your tools and cleaning products handy.
- **Change your filters.** Remember to replace or clean filters on your air conditioner, air purifier, dehumidifier and vents.
- **Don't overdo it.** Rest often and be realistic about your goals. If a task is making you tired, stop and ask yourself if you need help with it.
- **Keep the phone nearby.** Make sure it's always within reach.

For more safe cleaning ideas, go to [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and type "reducing hazardous products" into the search box.

Happy cleaning!

# Patient's Perspective

## Living Well With COPD: Cruising Lake Michigan



*Charles Collins and Diane Cook.*



*Larise Johnson, Chicago CBS news reporter  
Rob Johnson, and Saundra Gatlin.*



*Rockford Memorial Pulmonary Rehab Group.*

On June 26th, 2007, more than 500 COPD patients and their loved ones took a boat cruise on Lake Michigan for a fun afternoon of lunch and socializing as part of the annual COPD Social Event organized by the Respiratory Health Association of Metropolitan Chicago (RHAMC). This unique event brings people living with COPD together from throughout Illinois to enjoy the outdoors and share strategies for living with COPD. The event caters to the specific needs of those living with COPD by providing onsite medical staff, oxygen and transportation.

The popularity of this year's cruise was astounding. "All 250 tickets sold out during early registration and the wait list was growing. Very quickly, we decided to reserve a second boat," explains Kristen Donnelly, Director of RHAMC's COPD Initiative. In the end, people representing 26 different pulmonary rehabilitation and support groups from throughout Illinois participated.

Everyone had a wonderful time and enjoyed the historical tour and live music. For many participants this event was a rare opportunity to visit Chicago and, for some, their first time on a boat.

However, one highlight of the day came long

after everyone went home. The event's emcee, Rob Johnson of Chicago's CBS news, reported the success of the COPD Social Event on the evening news. His story helped raise awareness by reaching thousands throughout Chicagoland.

"It was amazing to see so many people living with COPD come together to celebrate healthy, active lifestyles," says Donnelly. "The best moment for me was when a woman said that for the first time, she felt proud to be a COPD patient."

If you would like more information about the COPD Initiative or upcoming events, please visit [www.copdchicago.org](http://www.copdchicago.org) or contact Kristen Donnelly, Director, COPD Initiative at (312) 628-0227 or [kdonnelly@lungchicago.org](mailto:kdonnelly@lungchicago.org).

### Save the Date

The COPD Respiratory Rally 2007 will be held on Tuesday, November 13th at the Marriott O'Hare. To reserve your space or for more information, call Eileen Lowery at (312) 628-0217 or visit [www.copdchicago.org](http://www.copdchicago.org).

# Ask the Doctor

## *COPD and a Healthy Sex Life*

### ***Can a person with COPD have a normal sex life?***

Definitely. Even though it may not be the same as when they were younger, sex is still important. Sex may be less frequent, and it may happen at a different time of day, but COPD doesn't mean their sex life is over. I like to remind people that more than 70% of men and 50% of women over age 70 are still sexually active.

### ***Why might some people with COPD feel otherwise?***

Self-image is very important to sexuality. If a COPD patient uses oxygen, or is depressed or worried about his or her limitations, the patient may feel less attractive. We need to eliminate that kind of thinking. A person with COPD is still attractive. He or she can be intimate and have sex. However, there may also be physical issues. Certain medications and diseases such as diabetes can get in the way. Many of these problems can be solved with a doctor's help or medication, like Viagra for erectile dysfunction.



**Dr. Michael H. Ries** is a pulmonary critical care physician and powerful advocate for the role of pulmonary rehabilitation in helping people with COPD enjoy their lives better. Today, he spoke to us about sex and COPD.

### ***Do you have tips for people who want to enhance their sex lives?***

I encourage people to experiment. If you have trouble breathing in the evenings, try mornings or afternoons when you have more energy. Wear oxygen if it helps. Use your bronchodilator ahead of time. Find a position that's comfortable and enjoyable. Don't think you can't do it anymore just because it may take longer or it doesn't happen every time. Life is

meant to be enjoyed, and experimenting to find out what's best for you can be enjoyable, too.

### ***What can a partner do to help?***

Most important—your partner needs to know that sex won't hurt a person with COPD.

### ***Who can a person talk to about concerns?***

Some doctors wait until a person has advanced COPD before recommending pulmonary rehabilitation. I encourage patients to go sooner, so they can improve their quality of life—and sex is an important part of that. If you're in pulmonary rehab, there's probably someone on the team you feel comfortable talking with about private issues. They can make suggestions, refer you to the right doctor or therapist, or provide printed materials that can help.

### ***Any other advice?***

Just don't be embarrassed. Sex is part of human nature and gives people pleasure. Everyone does it.

# Knowing How to Exercise Can Help You Feel Better



*Advocate Good Samaritan's Pulmonary Rehab Team: Margaret Weinmann, Patty Jacklin and Lori Novotny.*

If you have COPD, you've probably heard of pulmonary rehabilitation. But what is it, and could it help you? Pulmonary rehab can include learning the best exercises and breathing techniques for you, receiving emotional support and more—all to increase your energy, breathe more easily and improve your daily life.

In Illinois, some programs are certified by AACVPR, the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation, a national association which has recently issued new guidelines for pulmonary health. The guidelines suggest that exercise and education are key to feeling better and more independent, and recommend training by registered respiratory therapists (RRTs), such as the team at Advocate Good Samaritan Hospital.

At Advocate Good Samaritan, participants work with three RRTs, Margaret Weinmann, Patty Jacklin and Lori Novotny. For nearly ten years, they have helped patients learn

how to exercise to meet specific goals. In addition, they provide breathing retraining and help patients understand the roles of medications, energy conservation and proper nutrition in improving breathing. The therapists work closely with a pulmonologist in creating a program, determining oxygen needs and monitoring each person's progress.

After completing the program, participants have greater control of symptoms, enjoy greater levels of activity and feel less anxious and depressed. By understanding COPD better, they feel better all around.

Using a comprehensive database, the team has been able to track overall patient progress. Each year has shown steady improvement, with fewer people going to the hospital—proving that healthy lifestyle choices make a difference. If you think pulmonary rehabilitation might be a good idea for you, talk to your doctor right away.

## Hike for Lung Health

Join us for our 1st Annual Hike for Lung Health on Sunday, September 23, 2007, at 10:00 am in Chicago at Montrose Harbor or in Palatine at the Deer Grove Forest Preserve. The walk will help promote healthy lungs and fight lung disease through research, advocacy and education. Lung health groups are invited. For more information or to join our COPD team, please call Stephanie Russell at (312) 628-0223 or register online at [www.lungchicago.org](http://www.lungchicago.org).

# Advances & Updates

## National Pulmonary Rehabilitation Policy Underway

Thanks to the efforts of Advisory Council member Lisa Zaenger and hundreds of *Inspiration* readers, we may soon have a law ensuring uniform pulmonary rehab benefits for all COPD patients.

Because Medicare regulations provide for no specific benefit for pulmonary rehabilitation, local and regional Medicare (CMS) offices have been free to determine the level of coverage for their particular area. This has led to wide variation in benefits.

Earlier this year Zaenger delivered nearly 400 letters to Washington legislators urging full and uniform coverage. As a result of this action, Rahm Emanuel, Jan Schakowsky, John Shimkus and Dick Durban are co-sponsoring legislation House Bill HR552 and Senate Bill S329.

We applaud this legislative initiative, but we'll need more reader support to pass the legislation.

Please call your legislators today and let them know how important pulmonary rehab is for people living with COPD and ask them to cosponsor these bills. You can find your legislator's contact information by visiting <http://elections.il.gov/DistrictLocator/>. For more information about our advocacy activities please contact Kristen Donnelly at (312) 628-0227 or [kdonnelly@lungchicago.org](mailto:kdonnelly@lungchicago.org).



*Kristen Donnelly (center), Audrea Hardwicks and Joe Durr after meeting with legislators during RHAMC's 2007 Advocacy Day in Springfield.*

## COPD Clinical Research Study

Physicians at Northwestern University are conducting a clinical research study to determine if adding an investigational medication to current approved COPD medications will improve subjects' symptoms.

Qualified participants will be asked to make 15 visits over a 2 year period. All study related care, parking validation and public transportation are provided at no cost. Monetary compensation is also provided.

Participants must:

- Be 45 years or older
- Be diagnosed with COPD or emphysema
- Be an ex-smoker for at least a year

For more information, please call 312-926-0975.

## SPOTLIGHT

In each issue, we spotlight four COPD-Emphysema support groups and/or pulmonary rehabilitation centers that can help you. For a detailed list of programs in your area, visit [www.copdchicago.org](http://www.copdchicago.org) or call Kristen Donnelly, Director, COPD Initiative, at (312) 628-0227.

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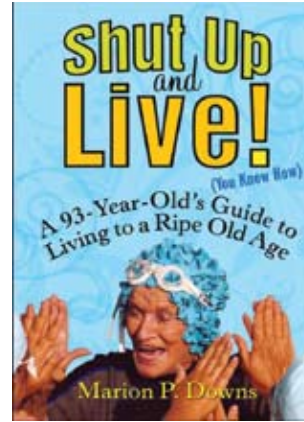
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## COPD Book Corner

### Shut Up and Live! (you know how)

Written by Marion P. Downs



Ninety three-year-old Marion Downs, a two-pack-a-day smoker for more than 30 years, gave up smoking when she was 55. Although she now lives with COPD, bursitis, high blood pressure, arthritis, reflux, a brain tumor

and other ailments, it doesn't stop her from living life to the fullest. In 2005, she wrote a delightful, inspiration book, entitled *Shut Up and Live* in which she conveys her wisdom and humor for a long, happy, healthy life. Her book focuses on how to stay mentally active and physically fit to take on the challenges of aging. We highly recommend it!

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If you would like to have upcoming issues of our free *Inspiration* newsletter delivered to your home, please call Kristen Donnelly at (312) 628-0227. **Please feel free to copy and distribute this newsletter.**

To help support *Inspiration* with a donation, please call Joann Morrone at (312) 628-0221.



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