

Living with Pulmonary Hypertension

Living a healthy life is important for everyone. A healthy lifestyle incorporates optimal nutrition, exercise, sleep, and mental health. When living with a chronic medical condition, such as pulmonary hypertension, this becomes especially important.

Nutrition

Making healthy food choices can do a lot to help Pulmonary Hypertension.

Key Principles include:

- Eat "real food," and avoid processed foods and sugar.
- Manage salt and fluid intake fluid and sodium goals are different for each person, so it is important to talk to your team and find out your specific intake/limits each day.
- Track your weight picking up on early weight changes can help you keep your symptoms in check.



Exercise

Exercises you can perform will depend primarily on what kind of PH you have, how severe your disease is, and your other underlying health conditions. Before beginning any exercise program, it's very important to consult with your PH providers. Pulmonary rehabilitation may be prescribed by your PH team. Examples of exercises for patients with PH include:

- Walking - Biking - Yoga
- Stretching and Resistance training for small muscle groups

Ultimately, the most effective exercise is the one you can do most consistently.

Sleep

Sleep is foundational to health, so it is important to talk with your PH team to make sure your sleep has been assessed and you are sleeping as well as possible. Additionally, if you have sleep apnea or low nighttime oxygen levels, it is very important to treat it

Good sleep habits include:

- Avoiding caffeine in the afternoons
- Minimizing alcohol if that disturbs your sleep
- Avoiding a heavy meal right before bedtime
- Avoiding screens in the 2-3 hours before bedtime



Mind & Spirit

- **Mental health:** It is normal to go through lows after being diagnosed with a chronic illness, however when these lows are persistent and prevent someone from living their best life, they should be addressed.
- **Support:** Connecting with families and friends is invaluable in living day-to-day with pulmonary hypertension. Many people also find support and comfort in faith-based organizations, on social media-based support pages and in PH specific support groups.
- **Mindfulness, meditation and exercise:** These techniques can also help with working through stress and anxiety.

