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HOW PHYSIOTHERAPISTS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

Physiotherapy involves supporting people to manage symptoms, including breathlessness, airway clearance and low activity levels. Treatments may include:

- positioning to clear phlegm and manage breathlessness
- breathing exercises - sometimes using devices, like positive expiratory pressure devices
- review of inhaler technique
- active aerobic and strengthening exercises
- information about COPD and symptoms
- pulmonary rehabilitation

TIP:

Try to exercise every day!

Work with your Physiotherapist to identify some exercises that you can perform most days – these could be chair-based exercises, walking, dancing, cycling or even a full pulmonary rehabilitation programme.

RESOURCE:

Exercise, COPD & Me on
www.copd.ie



HOW MEDICAL SCIENTISTS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

TIP:

Ensure any testing is performed and evaluated by a registered competent professional

- Patients with COPD may be unable to breathe in (inspire) sufficient oxygen and breathe out (expire) carbon dioxide
- Analysis of a blood sample to measure the concentrations of oxygen and carbon dioxide in the body is often used in assessing people with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. This test evaluates how well your lungs can move oxygen into the blood and carbon dioxide out of the blood
- A sample of blood is usually drawn from an artery in your wrist using a needle and syringe and analysed immediately in specialised equipment - a blood gas analyser
- Medical Scientists evaluate the correct analytical performance of this equipment (ISO 22870) and supervise the ongoing maintenance of this equipment
- Medical Scientists provide the training and competency assessment for any non-scientific staff operating this equipment and are trained and provide training in the interpretation of your results and ensure adherence to National Guidelines for the operation of Blood Gas equipment used outside of the laboratory, in ward and clinic areas



HOW SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPISTS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) can help people with COPD, eat, drink and communicate to the best of their ability. Swallowing difficulties, reflux, changes to voice and speech, chronic cough and oral hygiene issues are very common in COPD. These may be caused by changes in the breathing – swallow pattern, physical changes (increased fatigue, dry mouth, and reflux) and side effects of certain medications

SLT assessment can

- identify areas of risk for each individual,
- recommend appropriate textures and consistencies
- suggest strategies or therapies that may make eating and drinking or communicating easier.

TIP:

Look after your mouth, by carrying out oral care at least twice each day. Regular oral care, by brushing teeth, tongue and gums, can reduce risk of chest infections.

RESOURCE:

HSE Pulmonary
Rehabilitation Videos

www.iaslt.ie

www.hse.ie



HOW OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

Occupational Therapists (OT's) assess how COPD affects your ability to be independent in your activities of daily living. They are dual trained in both physical and mental health. They look at the important occupations (self-care, work and leisure) you need and want to do every day and help you stay engaged in these activities. Treatments may include:

- Education on daily activity management including energy conservation techniques
- Advice on adaptive equipment that may help you, for example long handled aids for shoes and socks
- Home environment assessment for advice on necessary adaptations, for example rails or a seat in the shower
- Stress and anxiety management education including teaching relaxation techniques
- Occupational Therapists may be a member of the multidisciplinary team in Pulmonary Rehabilitation

TIP:

The aim is to work smarter not harder! Work with your Occupational Therapist to identify how you can use the energy you have to its best effect.

RESOURCE:

Pulmonary Rehab
Education Videos – COPD

www.copd.ie

HOW DIETITIANS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

Dietitians are the only qualified and regulated health professionals who can assess, diagnose and treat nutritional problems. Dietitians can support people with COPD to make diet related changes that will benefit their overall health. Dietitians may work with people with COPD in a variety of ways:

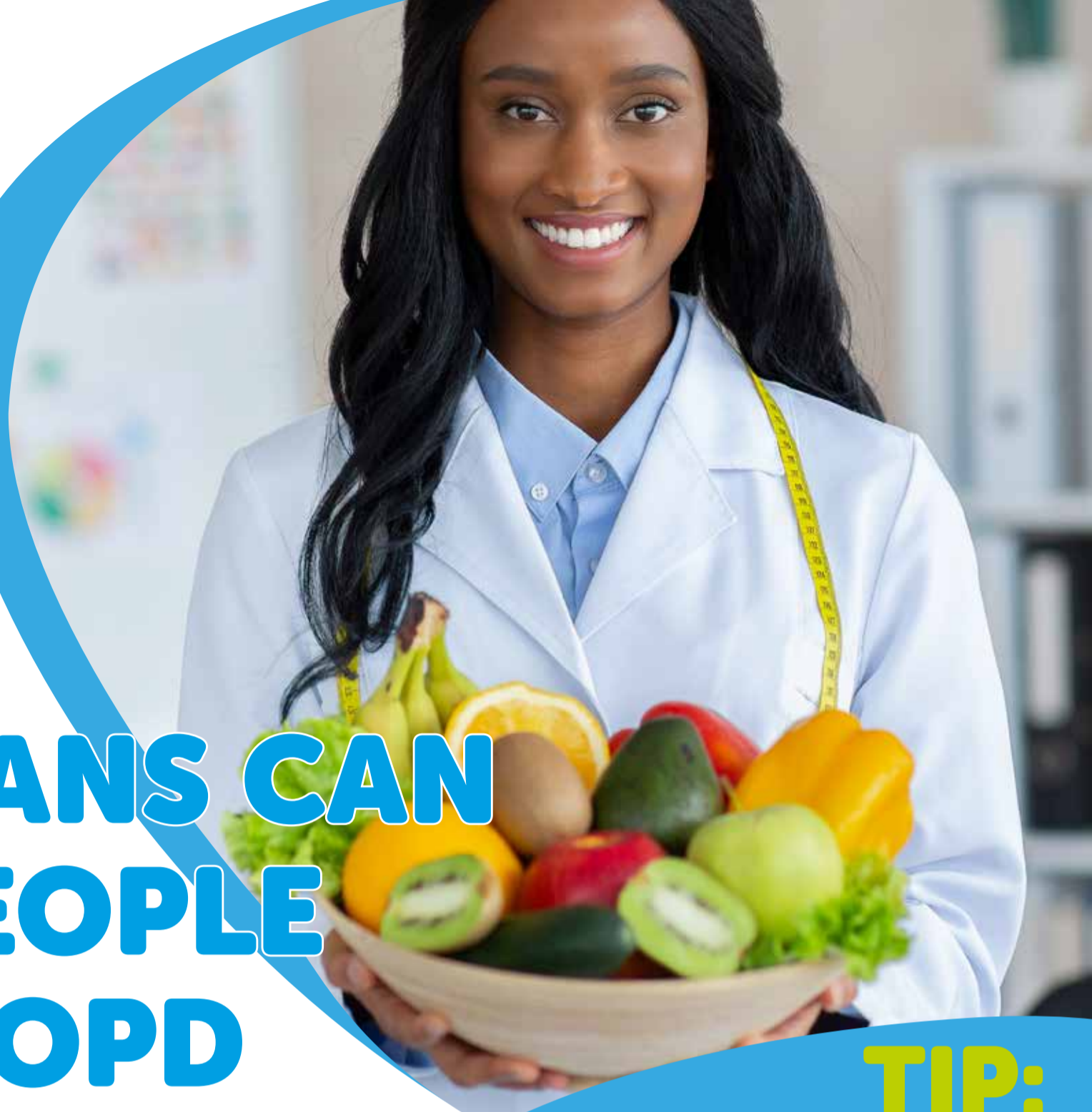
- Managing weight loss or weight gain
- Ensuring a good quality diet to meet overall energy and nutrient needs
- Providing strategies to help manage weight. For example, if a person has lost weight due to infection or increased work of breathing, looking at ways to increase energy with food fortification or oral nutritional supplements.
- If a person has gained weight and is advised to lose weight, advising on dietary strategies to achieve a healthy approach to weight loss.
- Increasing knowledge on the relationship between food and health

TIP:

If you have lost weight without trying, have a poor appetite or need to gain weight try to eat little and often, choosing smaller meals and snacks. Try to have a protein food at two meals, for example cheese, meat, chicken, fish, eggs, beans, pulses or nuts. If you are unable to get all the nutrition you need through your food and drink, oral nutrition supplements may be useful. Ask your Doctor to refer you to see a Dietitian.

RESOURCE:

HSE Pulmonary
Rehabilitation Videos
www.hse.ie



HOW SOCIAL WORKERS CAN HELP PEOPLE WITH COPD

Social workers provide support to the individual and their family; to understand, empower and advocate for the COPD sufferer to adjust and cope better with their situation, and to bring about positive change in all aspects of their lives.

Services we can provide:

- Emotional support and counselling to address stress, anxiety, lifestyle changes, optimise coping skills or any issues that might impact on your health management.
- Optimise functioning and how the person and their carer copes at home – e.g. referrals to community services or carer support groups, day centres, home care packages, Fair Deal/long term care, advanced care planning and palliative care supports.
- Advice, information, advocacy and assistance in relation to social welfare issues or financial supports.
- Assessments, interventions and/or refer to the appropriate agencies on issues including child protection, relationship difficulties, addiction, homelessness, housing issues, domestic violence.
- Support marginalised groups to access healthcare.

If you feel you would benefit from social work support, please ask your GP or health team to send a referral.

TIP:

Living with COPD can affect your life in many different and unexpected ways; talk to your family, friends and health care professionals – its ok not to know what to do, if you are struggling or need help – just ask.

RESOURCE:

HSE Pulmonary
Rehabilitation Videos

www.hse.ie

