



Quality Spotlight - Lung Health

HopeHealth's quality focus for July is lung health. This clinical focus includes measures like tobacco/vape cessation, asthma assessment/control, COPD assessment/control, and screening for lung cancer.

Below, read about how exercise can positively impact your lungs!

Breathe Easier: The Surprising Link Between Exercise And Lung Health

Deana Freeman, AGNP

Most Americans are aware that regular physical activity is beneficial for their heart and circulatory system and helps prevent and manage other medical conditions. Did you know that improving your fitness levels also benefits your lungs and improves lung capacity, the maximum amount of air the lungs can hold? Exercise also helps increase oxygen in the blood to maximize your overall strength and endurance.



Improving lung health with physical activity also helps those with lung issues, including COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), bronchitis, asthma, and other lung conditions. Additionally, exercise helps decrease lung inflammation in the airways and benefits overall lung health, which can help manage respiratory symptoms and improve quality of life.

Physical activity increases the heart rate to supply the lungs with more oxygen for the heart and circulatory system, while allowing muscles to do more work. Over time, regular exercise strengthens the lung muscles, including the diaphragm and the intercostal muscles, to improve lung capacity and increase oxygen in the blood. The diaphragm is a dome-shaped muscle between the chest and abdomen that works when breathing in and out by contracting and relaxing, allowing air in and out of the lungs. The intercostal muscles, located between each rib, help the ribcage expand and shrink as you breathe.

Only one in four Americans meet the guidelines for aerobic and strength training exercise, so if you aren't physically active, start by meeting with your health care

provider to find out what types of exercises are safe and best for you.

Three different types of exercises can help the lungs: cardiovascular or aerobic exercise, strength training, and breathwork.

Regular aerobic exercise, such as walking, running, biking, swimming, and dancing, increases heart rate and lung efficiency by building more blood vessels in the lungs. This leads to improved lung capacity and overall lung function. As your lung function improves, you recover from being out of breath faster, and you will not get winded as quickly to begin with. The general recommendation for aerobic exercise is to aim for 30 minutes a day, five days a week.

Adding strength training exercises like lifting weights, using machines or bands, doing squats, pushups, and other similar activities helps tone the lung muscles while strengthening other muscles, improving posture, and optimizing overall lung function. Strength training also helps improve balance and coordination and decreases the risk of falls. Aim to complete muscle-strengthening exercises two times a week, focusing on all major muscle groups.

Using breathing exercises or “breathwork” can also benefit your lungs. Regular breathing doesn’t use your lungs to their full capacity. Diaphragmatic or “belly” breathing uses the abdominal muscles to help take longer, slower, and fuller breaths. Regular breathwork can help strengthen your diaphragm, improve lung capacity, decrease oxygen demand, slow your breathing rate, and use less energy and effort to breathe while promoting relaxation. Breathwork is free and can be done anywhere, any time!

Individuals can learn to be more active, even with medical conditions and physical challenges. Medical memberships at a gym may help those who need more individualized assistance, but a gym membership isn’t necessary to be active. Start where you can. Begin with 5-15 minutes of activity, depending on your overall health. If you have a medical condition that makes moving difficult, start with just three to five minutes of activity. YouTube videos and walking are free and an easy place to start. Walking to the mailbox, around the block, or finding easy walking or chair exercise videos can help you start an activity program. Add more minutes each week as you are able. Build up over time to 30 minutes a session (or three 10-minute segments, two 15-minute segments in a day) and work up to five days a week. If this goal isn’t realistic or too challenging, do what you can. Anything you can do to be more active on a regular basis is always better than doing nothing!

Some individuals may find sticking with a physical activity routine challenging. First, decide why you want to be more physically active, whether it’s to feel better, keep up with kids or grandkids, or build endurance. Explore what type of activity you enjoy to help keep you going. Options to stay motivated can be finding a buddy, starting a new sport or class, keeping an exercise diary, or setting up a reward system. Start slow and build over time instead of doing too much too soon and giving up. Remember your “why” when you don’t feel like doing your exercise routine. Most people feel better after physical activity, which can also increase motivation to move more consistently.

Increasing activity levels can also help decrease joint and back pain, build strength and balance to do other things, and improve mood and overall quality of life. Movement also helps boost your immune system and decreases inflammation. Listen to your body and push more on days you feel strong and do less when your energy levels are lower. Consistency without overdoing it is the key to reaping the benefits of regular movement without burning out.

Other lifestyle habits, in addition to exercise, can also affect lung health. Adequate hydration helps keep the lining of your lungs moist and thin, prevents infections, and makes breathing easier for those with asthma or COPD. A general guideline is 8-10 glasses (64-80 ounces) of water daily.

Eating more whole foods, such as fruits and vegetables, and fewer processed foods, also helps protect the lungs. Nitrites in processed meats, along with additives and preservatives added to many processed foods, are linked with lung inflammation, while

fruits and vegetables help improve inflammation.

Not using tobacco products also preserves and improves lung function for smokers. If you smoke, make a plan to quit. Explore resources such as the South Carolina Tobacco Quitline at quitnowsc.org. There are also apps that use texting or coaching to help support quitting.

Adding more movement and improving lifestyle habits does not provide an overnight fix. It takes time to make changes. Being realistic, not doing too much too fast, and making slow, steady progress helps prevent burnout, overwhelm, and the urge to give up. Setbacks are normal, especially with life changes such as illness, accidents, job changes, vacations, holidays, or any major change in your schedule. The key is to get back to healthy habits as soon as you can.

Physical activity helps your body get stronger, improving lung function and overall health. If you already have a physical activity routine, congratulations, and keep up the good work! If you don't have a movement routine, take the first step to talk to your provider and start moving more today!

Partnership Spotlight: Healthy Huddle with LaNorris Sellers



On July 19, 2025, HopeHealth hosted The Healthy Huddle: Back to School with LaNorris Sellers in the Meditation Garden on the HopeHealth Medical Plaza campus. This event allowed HopeHealth pediatric patients and their families to interact with Sellers and prepare for the school year.

Attendees participated in a dynamic exercise routine facilitated by Deon Edwards, Director of Sports Performance at Francis Marion University. They also enjoyed games, healthy snacks, and back-to-school supply giveaways, as well as autographs and photos with Sellers.

The event provided a natural opportunity for Sellers to highlight the importance of healthy habits and their impact on and off the field. He shared, "Eating nutritious food and exercising both directly affect your performance. Sleep is another super important

thing.”

HopeHealth pediatrician Michael K. Foxworth II, MD, FAAP, was also in attendance, leading participants in a mindfulness exercise. Dr. Foxworth was Sellers’ pediatric provider, making his involvement extra special.

Sellers shared, “Dr. Foxworth was my provider until I was 18, and the same goes for my two younger brothers. I’ve known him for a while and still talk to him. My new provider at HopeHealth is Dr. Hoyle, and I have a good relationship with him as well.”

The event was offered as part of a collaboration between Sellers and HopeHealth. On the importance of this partnership, he shared, “I’ve been coming to HopeHealth since I was 5 or 6 years old. They have always welcomed me in, and I still have good relationships with many people who work here. It means a lot.”

When asked about one piece of advice he would give the kids at the event who were heading back to school, Sellers said, “Don’t get behind on work! Start early.”



[Click here](#) to see more photos from the event on our Facebook page!

Upcoming Facility Closure



Please note that all HopeHealth locations (including pharmacies) will be closed on **Monday, September 1**, for Labor Day. Patients can reach an on-call provider by calling the number associated with their provider. In an emergency, please dial 911 or visit your nearest emergency department.

HopeHealth School-Based Clinic Staff Gearing Up for the New School Year



The HopeHealth School-Based Clinic (SBC) team is excited and ready to support students, families, and staff as the new school year begins!

HopeHealth partners with Florence County School District 3 to provide school-based health services at Lake City High School and Florence One Schools to provide school-based health services at Brockington Elementary. A nurse practitioner works alongside nursing support staff to provide basic primary care, screenings, immunizations, and referrals as needed to students and staff. **Visit our website** for more information.

Recipe Spotlight

Watermelon Salad with Cucumber, Mint, and Feta

Makes 4 servings

Ingredients:

- 3 cups watermelon, cubed or balled
- 1 ½ cups sliced cucumber (2 small or 1 medium cucumber), remove seeds if desired
- 2 Tbs. small mint leaves
- 1/3 cup feta cheese, cubed or crumbled
- 3 Tbs. olive oil
- 1 Tbs. lime juice
- Pepper to taste (optional)

Directions:

- In a large bowl, add watermelon, cucumber, and mint.
- In a small bowl, blend olive oil, lime juice, and pepper. Drizzle over the melon mixture.
- Sprinkle with feta and serve.

Visit hope-health.org/community/events to learn about and sign up for free community classes offered by HopeHealth! Topics range from healthy cooking to diabetes management, prioritizing movement, carbohydrate counting, and more.



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