



WHAT IS COPD?

COPD, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, is an umbrella term used to describe progressive lung diseases, encompassing emphysema, chronic bronchitis, refractory asthma, and severe bronchiectasis. This disease is characterized by increasing breathlessness.

COPD FACTS

- The symptoms of COPD are: breathlessness, chronic coughing (with or without mucus), wheezing, tightness in chest, and frequent clearing of the throat. A chronic cough is not a natural part of aging nor is being short of breath.
- National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute estimates that 12 million adults have COPD and another 12 million are undiagnosed or developing COPD.
- COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in the US, accounting for 126,129 deaths in 2003.
- COPD kills more women than men each year.
- COPD will be the third leading cause of death in the US by 2020.
- A person with COPD dies every four minutes in the US.
- COPD cost the US economy \$32 billion, in direct and indirect costs in 2002.
- It is estimated that over 600 million people worldwide have COPD.
- Smoking is not the only cause of COPD; second-hand smoke, occupational dust and chemicals, air pollution and genetic factors also cause COPD.
- COPD is relatively easy to diagnose using a spirometry machine, where the patient exhales as much as possible into a tube.
- COPD does not have a cure, but treatments are currently available to help individuals manage their symptoms of COPD.