



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. The disease is characterized by increasing breathlessness.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

Symptoms include breathlessness, chronic coughing, and wheezing. Many people mistake their increased breathlessness and coughing as a normal part of aging.

DID YOU KNOW THAT...

- The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute estimates that 15 million adults have COPD and another 12 million are undiagnosed or developing COPD.
- COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S.—twelve years earlier than predicted.ⁱ
- COPD kills more women than men each year. In 2006, COPD killed more American women than breast cancer, Alzheimer's and diabetesⁱⁱ.
- Every four minutes an individual dies of COPDⁱⁱⁱ.
- COPD cost the U.S. government approximately \$42.6 billion in both direct and indirect expenses in 2007^{iv}. A majority of those expenses are due to hospitalizations, which can be prevented with better diagnosis and management practices.
- The WHO estimates that more than 300 million individuals worldwide have COPD and total deaths are expected to increase more than thirty percent in the next ten years^v.
- Smoking is not the only cause of COPD; second-hand smoke, occupational dust and chemicals, air pollution and genetic factors also cause this disease.
- COPD is relatively easy to diagnose using a spirometry machine, where the patient exhales as much as possible into a tube.
- There's no cure yet for COPD but treatments are available to help individuals live with their COPD.

ⁱ Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), *Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2008*. http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_02.pdf. Accessed 5/24/11.

ⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Breast Cancer Statistics: Top 10 Causes of Death for Women in the United States, 2005*. <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/statistics>. Accessed 11/18/09.

ⁱⁱⁱ National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, *COPD Learn More Breathe Better*®, <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/lung/copd/what-is-copd/index.htm>. Accessed 11/18/09.

^{iv} *Morbidity and Mortality: 2007 Chart Book on Cardiovascular, Lung and Blood Diseases*, pp 17, Chart 2-24, National Institutes of Health, National Heart Lung and Blood Institute.

^v *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Fact Sheet*, World Health Organization, http://www.who.int/gard/publications/chronic_respiratory_diseases.pdf. Accessed 09/22/15.