



### **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.

### **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 12 million adults have COPD and another 12 million are undiagnosed or developing COPD<sup>i</sup>.
- COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S.—twelve years earlier than predicted.<sup>ii</sup>
- COPD kills more women than men each year. In 2006, COPD killed more American women than breast cancer, Alzheimer’s and diabetes<sup>iii</sup>.
- Every four minutes an individual dies of COPD<sup>iv</sup>.
- COPD cost the U.S. government approximately \$42.6 billion in both direct and indirect expenses in 2007<sup>v</sup>. A majority of those expenses are due to hospitalizations, which can be prevented with better diagnosis and management practices.
- The WHO estimates 210 million individuals worldwide have COPD and total deaths are expected to increase more than thirty percent in the next ten years<sup>vi</sup>.
- 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.

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<sup>i</sup> Statistics from National Center for Health Statistics, National Health Interview Survey: Research for the 1995-2004 redesign. Hyattsville, Maryland: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC, NCHS. Vital and Health Stat 2(126), 1999.

<sup>ii</sup> 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](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr59/nvsr59_02.pdf). Accessed 5/24/11.

<sup>iii</sup> 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.

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

<sup>v</sup> *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.

<sup>vi</sup> *Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease Fact Sheet*, World Health Organization, <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs315/en/index.html>. Accessed 11/18/09.