**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.\(^i\)
- COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S.—twelve years earlier than predicted.\(^ii\)
- COPD kills more women than men each year. In 2006, COPD killed more American women than breast cancer, Alzheimer’s and diabetes.\(^iii\)
- Every four minutes an individual dies of COPD.\(^iv\)
- COPD cost the U.S. government approximately $42.6 billion in both direct and indirect expenses in 2007.\(^v\) 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.\(^vi\)
- 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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\(^v\) 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.