

COPD Essentials for Health Professionals

- **Primary care providers have a key role in the diagnosis and management of COPD.**
- **Consider diagnosis of COPD in adults with shortness of breath, with or without symptoms of cough and sputum production.**
- **Risk factors other than cigarette smoking history are important. Ten to 20 percent of cases may be due to environmental and occupational exposures.**
- **Pulmonary function testing is useful for determining the severity of COPD and distinguishing from asthma.**
- **Therapies are effective. Proactive treatment can improve the quality of life for patients with COPD.**

WHY COPD? WHY NOW?

- While other major causes of death have been decreasing, COPD mortality has continued to rise.
- COPD is the 3rd leading cause of death.
- 12 million Americans are diagnosed with COPD; research shows that many do not get optimal treatment.
- An additional 12 million Americans may have COPD and remain *undiagnosed*.
- Recent advances in treatment for COPD offer real opportunities to improve your patient's quality and length of life.

RISK FACTORS

- Look for COPD in patients who are over 40 and have:
 - Persistent or progressive dyspnea
 - Chronic cough or sputum production
 - Decline in level of activity

(continued on back)



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RISK FACTORS *(continued)*

- COPD is more likely if there is a history of smoking.
- Genetic factors and environmental or occupational exposures may also play a role: as many as *1 out of 6 Americans with COPD has never smoked.*

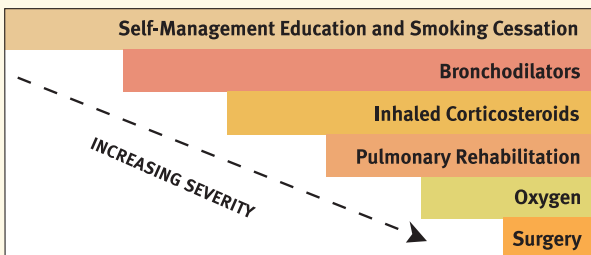
DIAGNOSIS: PULMONARY FUNCTION TESTING

- Perform or refer for a lung function test—spirometry—to determine the severity. Spirometry with bronchodilator testing may distinguish COPD from asthma.
- A criterion for diagnosis of COPD is a postbronchodilator $FEV_1/FVC < 0.7$.

TREATMENT

- Aggressive management of COPD can make a difference for the patient.
- Advances in therapies have been shown to improve survival or quality of life for COPD patients.
- COPD patients should receive professional assistance for smoking cessation.

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR COPD



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Breathe Better®

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While there is no cure, early detection and treatment of COPD can slow the disease and improve quality of life. Learn more at <http://copd.nhlbi.nih.gov>.



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