

Don't Let COPD Take Your Breath Away— Bridge the Exam Room Communications Gap

(NAPSA)—Coughing. Wheezing. Shortness of breath.

For many people, these symptoms may be seen as signs of a common cold, being out of shape, or just getting older. Many of them will not even bring these symptoms up when talking with their healthcare providers. That leaves their provider unaware that their patients may have COPD, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. In fact, many Americans remain undiagnosed, and their quality of life worsens unnecessarily.

What is COPD?

COPD is a serious lung disease that makes it difficult to breathe over time. Also known as emphysema or chronic bronchitis, COPD is the third leading cause of death in the United States. Symptoms include constant coughing (smoker's cough), shortness of breath during typical daily activities, wheezing, inability to take deep breaths, excessive mucus production and tightness in the chest. If you or someone you know has these symptoms, talk with your doctor or healthcare provider as soon as possible.

Talk with your Doctor

"We urge you to pay special attention to how you are breathing, especially if you become short of breath during your daily activities. Learn more about the symptoms of COPD and if they sound like you, start the conversation with your healthcare provider. Talking about any symptoms you may be experiencing will help them help you," said James P. Kiley, Ph.D., director of the Division of Lung Diseases at the



With proper diagnosis and treatment, people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease can live longer and improve their quality of life.

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health. "While there is no cure for COPD, early diagnosis and treatment can help people with COPD improve their symptoms, decrease the number of flare-ups, and get back to the activities they love doing."

COPD can be diagnosed with a simple, non-invasive breathing test called spirometry. If you or a loved one experiences any symptoms of COPD, take time to learn more about it. Tell your doctor about any symptoms or issues you may have performing daily tasks due to shortness of breath. With proper diagnosis and treatment, people with COPD can live longer and improve their quality of life.

Learn More

You can find out more about COPD by visiting <http://COPD.nhlbi.nih.gov>. This website is part of the COPD Learn More Breathe Better® awareness campaign from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health.