

Women's Health Update

What Women Need To Know About Lung Conditions

(NAPSA)—Doctors are becoming aware just how susceptible women are to lung disease, and a new report from the National Women's Health Resource Center (NWHRC) shows how an early diagnosis can save lives.

The growing number of women who have taken up smoking since World War II has dramatically changed the types of lung diseases doctors now diagnose in women.

For example, chronic obstructive pulmonary disorder (COPD) was considered a disease of men for decades, but has now become the fourth-leading cause of death in women.

While COPD is not curable, it is treatable. Some of the damage can be reversed, greatly improving a person's quality of life. Simply quitting smoking is the first step. This can keep lung function from getting worse.

Early screening makes a big difference because by the time you notice the symptoms, many patients have lost half their lung function.

Lung cancer is another disease on the rise in women. It's now the leading cause of cancer death in women, with deaths rising steadily in the last 20 years.

Lung cancer is the deadliest cancer around because it's more difficult to treat, more invasive and the majority of cases are found in the very late stages. If found at the earliest stage, the five-year survival rate is more than 50 percent.

About 20 percent of women who develop lung cancer never smoked, compared to less than 10 percent of men. This may be due to exposure to secondhand smoke, and hormones may also play a part.



While quitting smoking may be hard, it can save your life. Women who quit before age 50 can add 16 years to their life.

Quitting smoking is essential for keeping lungs healthy, yet it can be hard to quit since nicotine is one of the most addictive drugs around.

Here are some quitting tips from the NWHRC:

- Tell your health care professional and or dentist.
- Remember the benefits. Smokers who quit before the age of 50 have half the risk of dying in the next 16 years.
- Don't go it alone. Use nicotine replacement products if you need to or talk to your doctor about bupropion, an anti-depressant approved to treat nicotine addiction.
- Cut yourself some slack. Many smokers need two to three attempts at quitting before it sticks.
- Plan your quit strategy.
- Set rewards.
- Exercise to boost your metabolism (which is what nicotine does).

For more information, visit www.healthywomen.org.