

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) in Canada

Canadian COPD Prevalence

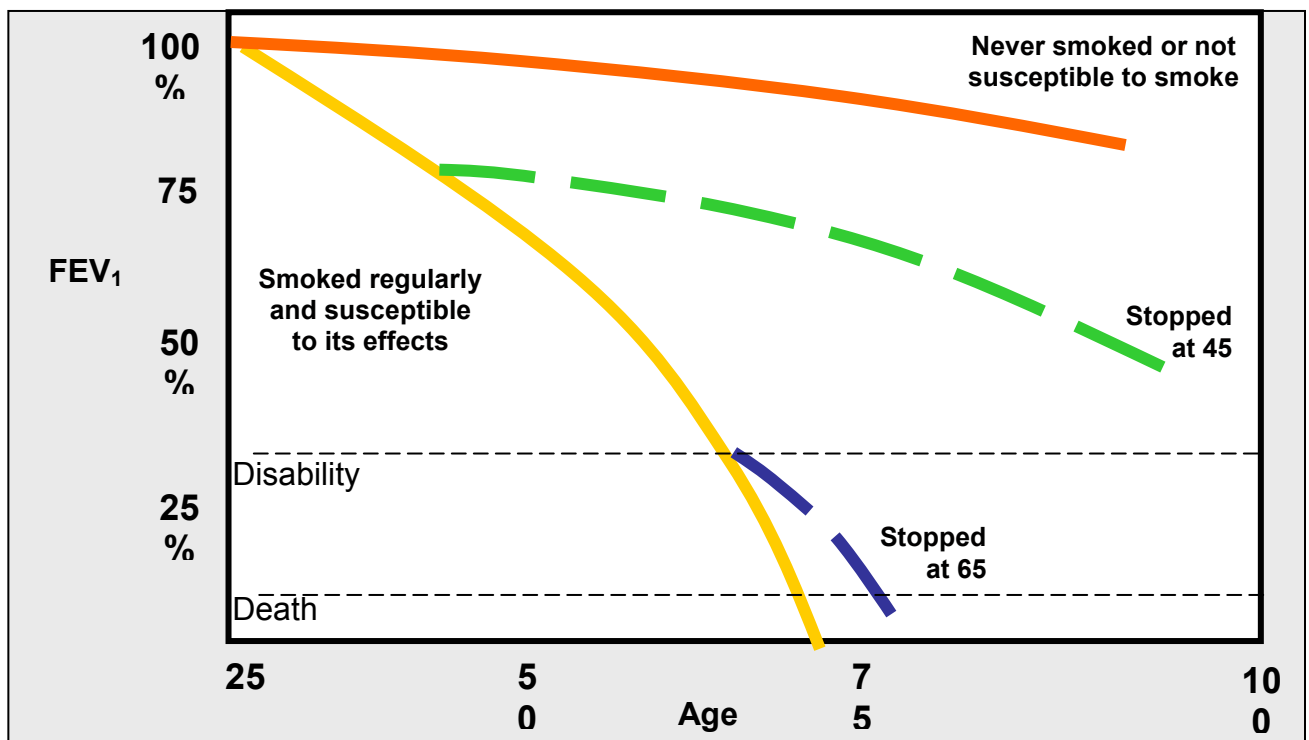
- Lung Association research shows that 1.5 million Canadians identify themselves living with COPD.ⁱ In addition, previous estimates have shown 1.6 million Canadians could have the disease but remain undiagnosedⁱⁱ
- These findings reflect global research which found that “the prevalence of stage II or higher COPD was 10.1% overall.”ⁱⁱⁱ

COPD Awareness

- Awareness is increasing, but remains low across Canada. Only 31 per cent have heard of the acronym COPD and only 48 per cent of Canadians have heard of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Awareness of COPD falls short of other major diseases - 31 per cent versus 94 per cent for Breast Cancer, 93 per cent HIV/AIDS and 92 per cent Alzheimer’s Disease.

What is COPD?

- COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease) is a chronic respiratory disease that causes lung damage and airway obstruction (blocks the airways). COPD is sometimes referred to as chronic bronchitis and/or emphysema.
 - *Chronic Bronchitis* is an inflammation of the airways in the lungs, which leaves them irritated. Chronic Bronchitis is characterized by the creation of extra mucus that blocks the airways resulting in a person coughing, spitting or finding it difficult to draw a breath.
 - *Emphysema* damages and destroys lung tissue. Large air pockets develop in the lungs where the air becomes trapped and causes a person to struggle to breathe.
- COPD is primarily caused by smoking but some research suggests that exposure to occupational pollutants and outdoor air pollution may contribute to developing the disease.
- COPD is Canada’s fourth leading cause of death^{iv}
- Lung function naturally declines with age, but the decline in smokers is significantly increased. The chart below explains how quitting smoking at any time will slow the decline of lung function.



*As lung function declines COPD sufferers experience increased disability and eventually death

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The Lung Health Test: Assessing Risk

- Introduced to the public by the Lung Association in 2003, the Lung Health Test is a tool designed to help Canadians recognize the symptoms of COPD.
- Canadians who are over 40 and are current or ex-smokers should visit their doctor if they answer “yes” to any of the following questions:
 - Do you cough regularly?
 - Do you cough up phlegm regularly?
 - Do even simple chores make you short of breath?
 - Do you wheeze when you exert yourself, or at night?
 - Do you get frequent colds that persist longer than those of other people you know?

Diagnosing COPD: Early Diagnosis is Essential

Spirometry is the most efficient way to accurately diagnose COPD. It is a simple breathing test that calculates the amount of air the patient's lungs can hold, and the rate at which the air can be expelled.

- Although COPD guidelines require spirometry for diagnosis over 1/3 of diagnosed Canadians have not been properly tested.^v
- Early diagnosis, when coupled with successful smoking cessation interventions, will provide substantial long-term health benefits.^{vi}

Disease Management: The Role of Pulmonary Rehabilitation

- Numerous controlled trials and meta-analyses have concluded that pulmonary rehabilitation offers significant health benefits; there is also growing evidence that pulmonary rehabilitation is a cost-effective way to reduce hospitalizations and death
- Pulmonary rehabilitation is considered a first line treatment for COPD and is recommended by all the major medical authorities on COPD, including The Canadian Thoracic Society, the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP) and the American Association of Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Rehabilitation
- Pulmonary rehabilitation can help minimize the number of COPD patients who resort to hospitalization for treatment, thus reducing the financial burden on the Canadian healthcare system
- A 2005 research paper on the state of pulmonary rehabilitation in Canada concluded that despite its status as a cornerstone of COPD treatment, it was available to only 1.2% of the COPD population

i 2008 Leger Marketing research – consumer poll

ii Undiagnosed COPD patients were identified (in 2007 research) according to standardized disease predictors endorsed by Canadian physicians and the Lung Association known as the Lung Health Test (available at <http://www.lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc/breathworks-actionair/test.html>)

iii Buist, Sonia A. et al. International variation in the prevalence of COPD (The BOLD Study): a population-based prevalence study. *Lancet* 2007; 370: 741-50.

iv CTS 2007 Guidelines http://www.csrt.com/e_news.php?display&579&item Web Site accessed October 25, 2007

v DE O'Donnell, S Aaron, J Bourbeau, et al. Canadian Thoracic Society recommendations for management of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease – 2007 update. *Can Respir J* 2007;14(Suppl B):5B-32B.

vi COPD Guidelines