

B*etter* Breathing

February 2016

Volume 6 Issue 7

Women at Greater Risk for COPD

The risk of developing COPD could be 50% greater for women as it is for men, according to a new diagnostic method utilized by researchers from Lund University Sweden. Researchers noted the finding means gender may be an independent risk factor for developing the disease.

“We see a clear increased risk for women contracting COPD compared with the risk for men. And it applies even when other risk factors, such as smoking and age, are taken into consideration,” said Johannes Luoto, a researcher at Lund University and a doctor at the geriatric clinic of Skåne University Hospital.

It was previously not certain whether there was a gender difference for the risk of developing COPD, and that is partly due to the fact that there are few studies that examine who is at risk for the disease. Another factor is that there has been a recent change in the way that COPD is diagnosed.

The few studies that have been done use methods to interpret pulmonary function involving spirometry test criteria which the European and American lung research organizations ERS and ATS now consider outdated and unable to produce reliable results,” said Luoto. “These older methods do not consider the age or sex of the examined subject when interpreting the lung function even though we know that normal aging effects lungfunction and suspect that there may be differences between sexes.”

Besides the effects of advanced age and smoking, researchers using the more modern method LLN (Lower Limit of Normal) in their study have seen clear differences between the genders for the risk of developing COPD. There was previous evidence that women’s airways could be more sensitive than men’s, but the older diagnostic methods have not shown with any certainty that there is a difference between the genders regarding the risk for contracting COPD.

from RT magazine



BREATHE CALIFORNIA

Clean Indoor Air Assessments

We have a free program to assess indoor air pollutants or irritants in your home. Now when your symptoms are worse is a good time to see what steps you can take to reduce home respiratory irritants. The results of the assessment are completely confidential and many remedies are simple. Call 408 998-5865 to make an appointment.

C O N T E N T S

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Third Cause of Death

Finding that you are short of breath after climbing up the stairs from the basement might seem like a sign that you are out of shape or just getting older. But being short of breath could also be a sign that you have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or COPD. This term is used to describe many different progressive lung diseases including emphysema, chronic bronchitis and refractory asthma. In addition to breathlessness, COPD symptoms include frequent coughing, wheezing and tightness in the chest.

Today COPD is the third leading cause of death in the United States and a major source of disability according to the National Institutes of Health.

What happens?

Normally, a person breathes air down the windpipe and into airways in the lungs. The airways branch into smaller tubes. At the end of these smaller tubes are tiny air sacs with blood vessels in the walls. When air fills the sacs much like a balloon, the oxygen is sent into blood in the vessels while carbon dioxide is returned to the air sac. When breathing out, the air in the sac with carbon dioxide goes out of the body. This happens 15 to 25 times per minute. When a person has COPD, this air flow is reduced due to a variety of factors. The airways and the air sacs might become less elastic or the wall of the airways might become thick and inflamed.

COPD is a progressive disease which means it doesn't improve. An estimated 24 million people in the U.S. have COPD and over half are unaware they have this condition.

Where does it come from?

Most cases of COPD are caused by inhaling pollutants. These pollutants may come from smoking or second hand smoke or from the fumes, chemicals and dust found in some work environments. However, even if a person has never smoked or been exposed to pollutants, it is still possible to develop COPD due to genetic factors. Studies are being done to determine which genetic predispositions can lead to COPD. Although people with COPD often cough, it is not conta-

gious. COPD is most frequently found in people 40 years and older. About 90 percent of people with COPD smoked during their lives.

What to do?

Although the symptoms of COPD cannot be reversed, they can be managed. There are treatments and lifestyle changes that can slow the progress of the disease. COPD develops slowly and unfortunately, when symptoms do appear, the disease is already in a more developed stage. The disease can be detected through a simple test which measures the amount and rate of air blown from the lungs.

excerpted from Chicago Tribune News



Smoking Age to 21

On January 26th, The City Council of Berkeley voted to raise the smoking age to 21, following in the footsteps of more than 110 municipalities across the nation, including New York City and Boston.

“Berkeley continues to emerge as a public health leader. They recognized that the smoking age should be the same as the drinking age,” said Brittini Chicuata, American Heart Association, Greater Bay Area Advocacy Director. “Studies have shown that over 90% of smokers begin before the age of 21. We support policies that limit access to tobacco products for youth.”

Recent studies show that raising the smoking age is an effective policy. A recent study of the first city to raise the age of purchase of tobacco products, Needham, MA, in the Journal Tobacco Control showed a significant reduction in tobacco use by Needham high school students. Additionally, an Institute of Medicine report released last year examined raising the age of purchase of tobacco products to 21. The IOM estimates 25% decline in smoking initiation among 15-17 year olds as well as a 12% reduction in smoking prevalence in the long term.

“Raising the legal age for the sale of tobacco product to 21 will better protect Berkeley adolescents from continued efforts of the tobacco industry to hook them on a deadly addiction,” said Beverly May, Regional Director of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

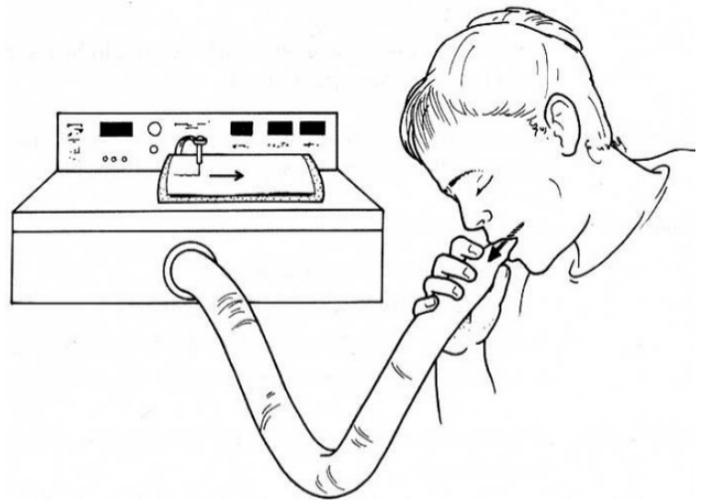
Raising the smoking age to 21 is also popular. A national study of public support by the Center for Disease Control found 75% of Americans support the policy.

excerpted from Yahoo News

February Meetings

The next BBC meeting date and time for Avenidas, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto is Wednesday February 17, 2016 from 10:30 am to 11:30 am. Additionally there will be COPD presentation and pulmonary function screening at Avenidas, on February 23, 2016 at 2:30 pm.

The next meeting for San Jose BBC group will be held at 1469 Park Ave on February 29, 2016 from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm. The next Morgan Hill BBC meeting at Centennial Recreation Senior Center 171 W. Edmunson Ave. on March 9, 2016 from 10:30 to 11:30.



Promote the BBC

We need your help to spread the word about our Better Breathers Club support group for people with lung disease. Help us by mentioning the meetings to your family, friends, neighbors, medical providers or community members. The strength of support group of its members sharing their coping skills and knowledge with others, especially those newly diagnosed. Call Janet (408) 998-5865 with any questions. We appreciate your time and effort.

Upcoming Better Breathers Club Meetings

Palo Alto - 3rd Wednesday of each month

Avenidas, 450 Bryant Street, Palo Alto, 94301

Wednesday, February 17, 2016

10:30 am to 11:30 am

Morgan Hill - 2nd Wednesday every other month

Centennial Recreation Senior Center 171 W. Edmunson Ave. Morgan Hill, 95037

Wednesday, March 9, 2016

10:30 am to 11:30 am

Breathe California of the Bay Area

1469 Park Avenue

San Jose, CA 95126

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Better Breathing Newsletter

San Jose - Last Monday of every month

Breathe California office, 1469 Park Avenue, San Jose 95126

Monday, February 29, 2016

1:30 pm to 2:30 pm

A Look Ahead: Upcoming BBC Meetings

San Jose – Monday, March 28, 2016

Palo Alto – Wednesday, March 16, 2016

Morgan Hill - Wednesday, May 11, 2016