

OUR HEALTH MATTERS

Welcome to 'Our Health Matters', a section of the Capital Health This Week aimed at promoting health. Each month you will read of a new focus for your own health. Each month you may also be challenged to think about how you are doing in that area.

Lung Health - by Noel Pendergast

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Two lung diseases that affect a lot of people in Nova Scotia are COPD and Asthma.

COPD is Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. It is a chronic lung disease largely caused by smoking. If you or someone you know is over 40 years old and is a smoker or used to smoke, consider 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?

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you should talk to your doctor about having a simple breathing test to test for COPD. There are treatments for COPD. The most important treatment is to quit smoking. For information on how to get help to quit smoking, phone the CDHA Tobacco Intervention Program at 902-424-2025.

The Lung Association has information about COPD on their website:

http://lung.ca/diseases-maladies/copd-mpoc_e.php

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that affects many children and adults in Canada. Typical symptoms of asthma include wheezing, shortness of breath and cough. Asthma can be managed so people with asthma should be able to lead an active life.

Do you or someone you know have asthma? If so, consider the following questions to evaluate if your asthma is under control:

Do you use your rescue (blue) inhaler 4 or more times per week?

Do you wake up at night with asthma symptoms 1 or more times per week?

Do you miss school or work because of your asthma?

Do you have asthma symptoms during the day 4 or more times per week?

Do you limit your physical activities because of your asthma?

If the answer to any of these questions is YES, you should consult your family physician about strategies to better manage your asthma so you can lead an active and symptom-free life!

For more information check out the Lung Association website for information on asthma (http://lung.ca/diseases-maladies/asthma-asthme_e.php) or www.asthma.ca