

COPD FOR **DUMMIES®**

by Kevin Felner, MD, and Meg Schneider



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

COPD FOR **DUMMIES®**

by Kevin Felner, MD, and Meg Schneider



WILEY

Wiley Publishing, Inc.

COPD For Dummies®

Published by
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2008 by Wiley Publishing, Inc., Indianapolis, Indiana

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the Publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Legal Department, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 10475 Crosspoint Blvd., Indianapolis, IN 46256, 317-572-3447, fax 317-572-4355, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, the Wiley Publishing logo, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, A Reference for the Rest of Us!, The Dummies Way, Dummies Daily, The Fun and Easy Way, Dummies.com and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Wiley Publishing, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK ARE INTENDED TO FURTHER GENERAL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH, UNDERSTANDING, AND DISCUSSION ONLY AND ARE NOT INTENDED AND SHOULD NOT BE RELIED UPON AS RECOMMENDING OR PROMOTING A SPECIFIC METHOD, DIAGNOSIS, OR TREATMENT BY PHYSICIANS FOR ANY PARTICULAR PATIENT. THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. IN VIEW OF ONGOING RESEARCH, EQUIPMENT MODIFICATIONS, CHANGES IN GOVERNMENTAL REGULATIONS, AND THE CONSTANT FLOW OF INFORMATION RELATING TO THE USE OF MEDICINES, EQUIPMENT, AND DEVICES, THE READER IS URGED TO REVIEW AND EVALUATE THE INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THE PACKAGE INSERT OR INSTRUCTIONS FOR EACH MEDICINE, EQUIPMENT, OR DEVICE FOR, AMONG OTHER THINGS, ANY CHANGES IN THE INSTRUCTIONS OR INDICATION OF USAGE AND FOR ADDED WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS. READERS SHOULD CONSULT WITH A SPECIALIST WHERE APPROPRIATE. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY ANY PROMOTIONAL STATEMENTS FOR THIS WORK. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR ANY DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002.

For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2008924951

ISBN: 978-0-470-24757-0

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



About the Authors

Kevin Felner, MD: Kevin Felner, MD, an assistant professor at New York University School of Medicine in New York City, is an expert in pulmonary and critical care medicine. He served a three-year fellowship at New York University Medical Center in pulmonary/critical care medicine and has taught medical students in his specialty (Department of Internal Medicine/ Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care) since 2004. He has earned three Teacher of the Year awards during his tenure at NYU, including being named best teacher of the Division of Pulmonary and Critical Care in 2005.

Before joining the NYU teaching staff, he taught at UT Southwestern Medical School and Mount Sinai Medical School, where he participated in pilot programs introducing first- and second-year medical students to effective patient interaction.

His research on lung and respiratory illnesses has been presented to the American Thoracic Society and published in journals such as the *International Journal of Surgical Pathology*.

Kevin earned his undergraduate and medical degrees from Emory University in Atlanta, where he received, among other honors, the Mrs. L. V. (Ola) Hammack Memorial Scholarship.

Kevin lives in New York City with his wife, Galit, and their son, Liam.

Meg Schneider: Meg Schneider is an award-winning writer with more than two decades of experience in television, radio, and print journalism and public relations. Meg has authored or coauthored several books, including *The Birth Order Effect for Couples* (Fair Winds Press) and *The Good-For-You Marriage* (Adams Media). Her other book credits include two books for writers and one on casino gambling.

Meg's journalism honors include awards from the Iowa Associated Press Managing Editors, Women in Communications, the Maryland-Delaware-D.C. Press Association, Gannett, the New York State Associated Press, and the William Randolph Hearst Foundation.

A native of Iowa, Meg now lives in upstate New York.

Dedication

Kevin dedicates this book to his wife, Galit, and son, Liam, whose love and support are the foundation of all he does and aspires to.

Meg dedicates this book to Bob and Helen Abel, for whose friendship and love she is grateful beyond words.

Authors' Acknowledgments

The tricky thing about acknowledgements is that you're always in danger of inadvertently forgetting to mention someone who will be mortally offended at the omission. On the other hand, if, in an attempt to include everyone, you dither on about the inspiration you received from Tom This, the encouragement of Dick That, and the patience of Harry the Other, not to mention the late-night coffee-and-ice-cream-sessions with Jane So-and-So and the eternal friendship of Sally Such-and-Such, your readers get restless. "Who *are* these people?" they fume to themselves, anxiously skimming the pages to see where the acknowledgements section finally ends. "Get on with it already!"

So. In the interests of brevity (and at the risk of being written out of someone's will), the authors offer their thanks to the following people:

The folks at Wiley, for recognizing the importance of arming readers with information about COPD and for supporting this book to fill that need.

Our editors, Tracy Boggier and Elizabeth Kuball, for their vision, support, patience, and dedication.

Our agent, Barb Doyen, for bringing us together on this project and acting as business partner, cheerleader, coach, and friend.

Nick Pastis, for making sure we didn't go off the rails.

Galit and Liam Felner, for all their patience, love, and understanding.

Mark Dixon, for hanging in there through all the loopiness.

And, finally, all those we should have included by name but didn't, for their forbearance and (we hope) forgiveness.

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book; please send us your comments through our Dummies online registration form located at www.dummies.com/register/.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Acquisitions, Editorial, and Media Development

Project Editor: Elizabeth Kuball

Acquisitions Editor: Tracy Boggier

Copy Editor: Elizabeth Kuball

Editorial Program Coordinator:

Erin Calligan Mooney

Technical Editor: Nicholas J. Pastis, Jr., MD

Senior Editorial Manager: Jennifer Ehrlich

Editorial Supervisor and Reprint Editor:

Carmen Krikorian

Editorial Assistants: Joe Niesen, David Lutton

Art Coordinator: Alicia B. South

Cover Photo: 3DClinic

Cartoons: Rich Tennant

(www.the5thwave.com)

Composition Services

Project Coordinator: Katie Key

Layout and Graphics: Reuben W. Davis,
Alissa D. Ellet, Stephanie D. Jumper,
Christine Williams

Special Art: Kathryn Born

Proofreaders: Laura Albert, Broccoli
Information Management

Indexer: Broccoli Information Management

Publishing and Editorial for Consumer Dummies

Diane Graves Steele, Vice President and Publisher, Consumer Dummies

Joyce Pepple, Acquisitions Director, Consumer Dummies

Kristin A. Cocks, Product Development Director, Consumer Dummies

Michael Spring, Vice President and Publisher, Travel

Kelly Regan, Editorial Director, Travel

Publishing for Technology Dummies

Andy Cummings, Vice President and Publisher, Dummies Technology/General User

Composition Services

Gerry Fahey, Vice President of Production Services

Debbie Stailey, Director of Composition Services

Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Part I: Every Breath You Take: The Who, What, and Why of COPD</i>	<i>7</i>
Chapter 1: Understanding COPD	9
Chapter 2: How Your Lungs Work	21
Chapter 3: COPD Risk Factors	33
<i>Part II: Catching Your Breath: Treating COPD</i>	<i>45</i>
Chapter 4: The Diagnosis and What It Means	47
Chapter 5: The Emotional Impact of COPD	63
Chapter 6: Building Your Healthcare Team	77
Chapter 7: COPD Treatment Goals	95
Chapter 8: Drug Treatments	111
Chapter 9: Surgery and Alternative Treatments	135
<i>Part III: In the Next Breath: Managing Your Overall Health</i>	<i>145</i>
Chapter 10: The First, Best Thing You Can Do: Quit Smoking	147
Chapter 11: Nutrition and Weight Management	165
Chapter 12: Getting Motivated to Move	183
<i>Part IV: Breathing Easier: Living with COPD</i>	<i>199</i>
Chapter 13: A Day in Your Life with COPD	201
Chapter 14: Making Your Home You-Friendly	221
Chapter 15: Clearing the Air at Home	239
Chapter 16: Preparing for Emergencies	251
Chapter 17: Helping a Loved One with COPD	265
<i>Part V: The Part of Tens</i>	<i>279</i>
Chapter 18: Ten Things to Avoid if You Have COPD	281
Chapter 19: Ten Myths about COPD	287
Chapter 20: Ten Strategies for Coping with COPD	293
Chapter 21: Ten (Or So) Health Factors Linked with COPD	299
<i>Glossary</i>	<i>307</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>319</i>

Table of Contents

Introduction..... 1

About This Book.....	1
Conventions Used in This Book	2
What You're Not to Read.....	2
Foolish Assumptions	3
How This Book Is Organized.....	3
Part I: Every Breath You Take: The Who, What, and Why of COPD	3
Part II: Catching Your Breath: Treating COPD.....	4
Part III: In the Next Breath: Managing Your Overall Health.....	4
Part IV: Breathing Easier: Living with COPD	4
Part V: The Part of Tens.....	5
Glossary.....	5
Icons Used in This Book.....	5
Where to Go from Here.....	6

Part 1: Every Breath You Take: The Who, What, and Why of COPD..... 7

Chapter 1: Understanding COPD 9

What COPD Is and Isn't	10
What COPD is: The deadly combo	11
What COPD isn't: Other lung ailments.....	13
How COPD Affects Your Body	15
Loss of energy	15
Loss of muscle strength.....	16
Working harder for fewer results	16
How COPD Affects Your Life	16
Missing work	17
Skipping social activities	17
Doing less at home	18
Losing it emotionally	18

Chapter 2: How Your Lungs Work 21

Your Breathing System	22
What happens when you breathe	24
Your body's air filtration system	26
Healthy Lungs versus Damaged Lungs.....	26
Healthy lungs	27
Damaged lungs.....	28



Factors That Influence Your Lung Function	29
Age.....	29
Environmental factors	30
Lifestyle factors	31
Chapter 3: COPD Risk Factors	33
Risky Behaviors.....	33
Smoking: The number-one risk.....	34
On-the-job risks	35
Air quality.....	37
Gender, Age, and Economic Status	38
Why women are more susceptible to COPD	38
Why COPD generally strikes after age 40	39
Why low-income patients are at risk	39
Looking Back: Heredity and Medical History	40
The genetic link to COPD	40
What your family history says about your COPD risk.....	41
What your own medical history says about your COPD risk.....	41
Other possible risk factors.....	42
Assessing Your Risk.....	43
 Part 11: Catching Your Breath: Treating COPD	45
 Chapter 4: The Diagnosis and What It Means	47
Knowing Which Tests Your Doctor May Run.....	47
Spirometry testing.....	48
Bronchodilator reversibility	50
Diffusion capacity.....	50
Oximetry.....	50
Lung volume tests	51
Chest X-rays	51
Arterial blood gas tests	52
Ruling Out Other Lung Diseases	53
Asthma.....	53
Lung cancer.....	54
Tuberculosis	55
Pleurisy.....	56
Assessing the Severity of Your COPD	56
The “at-risk” classification	56
Mild COPD	57
Moderate COPD	58
Severe COPD	58
Recognizing That There’s No Cure, Only Care	59
Things you can do to feel better	60
Things your doctor can do to help you feel better.....	60

Chapter 5: The Emotional Impact of COPD63

Now What Do I Do?	64
Identifying your limitations.....	64
Facing your fears	65
Grieving for your life as it used to be	66
Getting adjusted to your new life	67
Letting In Your Loved Ones	67
Dealing with emotions	68
Understanding resentment — on both sides.....	69
Figuring it out together.....	69
Managing Stress	70
Relaxing the body and mind	71
Cutting back on stress inducers.....	71
Taking care of yourself.....	71
Finding Other Support.....	72
People like you: COPD groups	72
Talking it out: What therapy can do.....	72
Considering antidepressants	73
Developing Coping Strategies.....	74

Chapter 6: Building Your Healthcare Team77

Finding a Doctor.....	78
What kind of doctor do you want?	78
Where to look.....	79
What to look for.....	80
The comfort factor	80
First Stop: Your Primary-Care Physician.....	81
Assessing your general health.....	82
Tracking vital functions	82
Getting referrals to specialists.....	82
Answering your questions	83
The Pulmonologist	83
What a pulmonologist looks for	83
How a pulmonologist can help	84
The Dietitian or Nutritionist	84
Improved nutrition equals better health.....	85
Assessing your eating habits	85
Setting nutritional goals	86
Creating a regimen that works for you	86
The Occupational Therapist.....	86
Helping you achieve your daily goals.....	87
Targeted exercise for your goals	88
The Counselor	89
Dealing with depression	90
Keeping up your mental energy.....	90
Balancing wild hopes and realistic expectations	91

Pulmonary Rehabilitation	92
Rehab goals	92
Who needs rehab.....	93
Chapter 7: COPD Treatment Goals	95
Controlling Progression and Symptoms.....	96
Changing your lifestyle to ease symptoms	96
Prescribing medicines to treat symptoms	97
Minimizing side effects	97
Preventing and Treating Complications.....	98
COPD's cohorts.....	98
Sudden onset of severe symptoms	100
Optimizing Lung Function.....	100
Increasing your tolerance for physical exercise	101
Trying breathing exercises.....	101
Keeping your airways clear.....	106
Chapter 8: Drug Treatments	111
Bronchodilators	112
Short-acting bronchodilators.....	113
Long-acting bronchodilators.....	114
Common side effects.....	116
Steroids.....	117
Forms of steroids.....	118
Side effects of steroids.....	118
Withdrawal effects	119
Combination Drugs	119
Mucolytic Agents.....	120
Using Inhalers Properly.....	121
Using an inhaler without a spacer.....	121
Using an inhaler with a spacer	122
Using dry-powder inhalers.....	124
Caring for your inhalers	124
Using a Nebulizer	127
Oxygen Therapy.....	127
When it's needed	128
Home oxygen equipment.....	129
Oxygen delivery systems	131
Taking Your Meds Properly.....	133
Chapter 9: Surgery and Alternative Treatments	135
Surgical Options	136
Bullectomy	136
Lung volume reduction surgery	138
Lung transplant	140
Alternative Treatments.....	140
Acupuncture.....	141
Nutritional supplements.....	141
Herbal treatments	143

***Part III: In the Next Breath: Managing
Your Overall Health..... 145***

Chapter 10: The First, Best Thing You Can Do: Quit Smoking147

Dying for a Cigarette	148
The biomechanics of nicotine addiction.....	148
Toxic chemicals in cigarette smoke	151
Recognizing Smoke's Effects on Your Body	152
Immediate effects of smoking	152
Long-term effects of smoking.....	153
What Happens When You Quit	155
How quitting helps your body	155
The temporary downside: Withdrawal.....	156
Why you should quit, even if you have COPD	157
Trying a Variety of Cessation Techniques	158
Cold turkey	158
Hypnosis	159
Antidepressants.....	160
Nicotine replacement.....	160
Chantix.....	162
Behavioral changes	162

Chapter 11: Nutrition and Weight Management165

Knowing Which Foods Help.....	166
Fruits and vegetables.....	166
Omega-3 fatty acids	168
Water	168
Being Aware of Which Foods Can Hurt	168
Carbohydrates	169
Salt and sodium	169
“Bad” fats.....	170
Nitrites	171
Potential Problem Foods.....	172
Fruits and vegetables.....	172
Fried and spicy foods.....	172
Dairy products.....	173
Caffeine	173
Controlling Your Weight	174
Risks of being overweight	174
Risks of being underweight.....	175
Changing the Way You Eat	176
Eliminating heavy meals.....	176
Adding more, smaller meals	176
Good-for-you snacking.....	177
What a Healthy Diet Looks Like	177
The protein you need.....	178
Vital vitamins and minerals.....	179
Fiber	180

Dietary Supplements	180
Pros and cons	180
What to look for	182

Chapter 12: Getting Motivated to Move183

How Movement Affects Your Body	184
Help for your circulatory system	184
Help for your respiratory system	185
Help for your sense of well-being	185
Setting Goals for Your Quality of Life	186
Thinking about what you'd like to do	187
Measuring your progress	188
Knowing why it matters	189
Exercise Training	189
Increasing your tolerance for exertion	189
Strengthening your limbs	191
Warming up	192
Cooling down	193
Designing Your Exercise Regimen	194
How to start	194
How often to do it	195
How long to do it	195
When to take it easy	196

Part IV: Breathing Easier: Living with COPD 199

Chapter 13: A Day in Your Life with COPD201

Your Daily Rhythm	202
Identifying your rhythm	202
Morning rituals	203
Energy for the afternoon	205
Quiet evenings	206
Loosening Up	207
Starting from the foundations	207
Choosing the right clothes and accessories	208
Dressing for the weather	209
Running Hot and Cold	209
Fans and air-conditioning	210
Heating options	210
Working with COPD	212
Talking to your employer	212
Adjusting your duties	213
Adjusting your schedule	213
Knowing when you shouldn't work	214
Planning for a time when you can't work	214

Outings with COPD	216
Choosing your activities	216
Checking the weather	217
Planning ahead	218
Chapter 14: Making Your Home You-Friendly	221
It's All within Reach	222
Reorganizing things you use often	222
Tools to help you get around	226
Tools to help you move your stuff around	227
Simplify, Simplify	227
Keeping meals simple	227
Quick cleaning tips	229
Creating a social center	230
On the Level	230
Minimize trips up and down stairs	230
Install handy ramps	232
When you have to stretch and bend	233
Asking for Help	235
Calling on family and friends	236
Outsourcing chores	236
When it's time for a home aide	236
Chapter 15: Clearing the Air at Home	239
Types of Indoor Air Pollution	240
Biological sources	240
Gases	241
Chemicals	243
Particles	245
Cleaning the Air	246
Eliminating the source	246
Improving ventilation	247
Using fresheners, filters, and purifiers	248
Chapter 16: Preparing for Emergencies	251
Suddenly Severe Symptoms	252
Defining a crisis	252
What causes them	253
Other complications	253
Preventing Sudden Attacks	254
What you can do	254
Why it matters	255
Treating Sudden Attacks	256
At home	256
In the ambulance, emergency room, or hospital	257

Creating an Emergency Plan	258
Knowing your warning signs	258
When to call your doctor	259
When to call for an ambulance	260
Information you'll need	260
End-of-Life Planning	261
Starting the discussion	261
Discussing whether you want life-sustaining treatments	262
Considering resuscitation: CPR	263
Putting it in writing	263

Chapter 17: Helping a Loved One with COPD 265

Brushing Up on COPD.....	266
How COPD affects your loved one	266
How your loved one's COPD affects you	266
Understanding the Treatment	269
Commonly prescribed drugs	270
Recommended lifestyle changes	270
Looking At Other Ways You Can Help	272
Arranging outings.....	272
Helping with household chores.....	273
Adapting the COPD home.....	273
Helping find new interests.....	273
Keeping your loved one comfortable	274
Paying attention to emotional health	274
Getting Involved in Medical Care	274
Talking with the medical team.....	274
Understanding the instructions	276
Providing transportation.....	276
Coping with Crises	276
Whom to call	277
When to call	277
What medical personnel need to know	278

Part V: The Part of Tens 279

Chapter 18: Ten Things to Avoid if You Have COPD 281

Smoke	281
Fumes.....	282
High Pollution Areas	283
Windy, Dusty Days	283
Very Cold Air.....	284
High Humidity.....	284
Heavy Meals.....	285

High Sodium Content.....	285
Sick People.....	286
Overexertion.....	286
Chapter 19: Ten Myths about COPD	287
COPD Is a Rare Condition.....	287
COPD Is a Man's Disease	288
Only Smokers Get COPD	288
Quitting Smoking Can Cure COPD.....	288
When You Have COPD, There's No Reason to Quit Smoking.....	289
Children Get COPD.....	289
COPD Is Only a Problem When Symptoms Are Severe.....	290
COPD Can't Be Treated.....	290
When You Go on Oxygen, You Have to Be on It Forever	291
People with COPD Can't Live Normal Lives.....	291
Chapter 20: Ten Strategies for Coping with COPD	293
See Your Doctor Regularly	293
Set Goals for Your Daily Activity Level.....	294
Establish an Exercise Regimen.....	294
Eat Healthfully	295
Use Your Meds Correctly	295
Conserve Your Energy	296
Go Easy on Yourself	296
Find a Support Group	297
Do Things You Enjoy.....	297
Let Others Help	298
Chapter 21: Ten (Or So) Health Factors Linked with COPD	299
Heart Problems.....	299
Hardening of the Arteries.....	301
C-Reactive Protein Levels.....	301
High Blood Pressure	302
Obesity	302
Weight Loss.....	302
Diabetes.....	303
Osteoporosis.....	304
Barrel Chest	304
Pulmonary Infections	305
Metabolic Syndrome.....	305
<i>Glossary</i>	<i>307</i>
<i>Index.....</i>	<i>319</i>

Introduction

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) — involving chronic bronchitis, emphysema, or both — is the fourth leading cause of death and the second leading cause of disability in the United States. Twelve million Americans have been diagnosed with COPD, and experts believe another 12 million suffer from COPD but don't know it.

COPD is a progressive disease, meaning it develops and gets worse over time. You don't just wake up one morning and realize you have COPD. Instead, you find that activities that used to be easy for you are harder now. You may become breathless walking upstairs, or you may have trouble carrying groceries into the house. You may not have the energy to eat at night, and this may lead to weight loss and a feeling of overall weakness. Even when you're sitting quietly, you may feel like you can't catch your breath.

And you may attribute all these symptoms to age, because COPD usually doesn't begin to make itself noticed until you're in your 40s, 50s, or 60s.

Part of the reason COPD is so severely under-diagnosed is that many physicians mistake its symptoms for other illnesses, particularly asthma. But effective treatments for asthma and COPD differ, and if you're being treated for asthma when you really suffer from COPD, chances are, your symptoms won't improve much.

And that leads us to another common misconception about COPD: that it cannot be treated. True, after damage is done to your lungs by smoking or other factors, that damage can't be reversed. But when it is properly diagnosed, COPD can be treated effectively, and with the proper treatment, you don't have to let COPD keep you from doing the things you enjoy.

About This Book

Our objective in writing this book is twofold. First, we want you to understand COPD — its causes and effects and why it makes you feel the way you do. We show you how your lungs work and how COPD interferes with your lung function. We talk about how impaired breathing affects the rest of your body. We discuss the differences between COPD and other lung diseases like

asthma and tuberculosis. And we put all this technical medical stuff in plain, easy-to-understand language, so you'll know what your doctor is talking about when he tosses off terms like *alveoli* and *forced expiratory volume*.

Second, we want you to know what you can do about COPD. Too often, people who are diagnosed with this disease feel powerless to improve their quality of life. But with the proper care and attention to your condition and your overall health, you can help yourself get the most out of living with COPD. Part of what you can do about it involves medications prescribed by your doctor — but that's only part of it. Nutrition and exercise play big roles in treating COPD and slowing its progress, and those two areas are up to you. We give you the information you need to make wise choices when it comes to eating and physical activity. Finally, we show you ways you can adapt to your condition without letting it dictate your life. Changes in your daily routine and the way certain areas of your home are organized can make life much easier for you, preserving your sense of independence and ability to enjoy life.

Conventions Used in This Book

For the sake of consistency and readability, we use the following conventions throughout the text:

- ✓ Medical and technical terms are in *italics*, and plain-English explanations of their meanings are nearby in the text, often in parentheses.
- ✓ When we give you steps to follow in a particular order, we put the action part of each step in **bold**.
- ✓ E-mail addresses and Web addresses are in `monofont`. **Note:** When this book was printed, some Web addresses may have needed to break across two lines of text. If that happened, rest assured that we haven't put in any extra characters (such as hyphens) to indicate the break. So, when using one of these Web addresses, just type in exactly what you see in this book, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist.

What You're Not to Read

This book is structured so that you can find the specific information you're looking for without wading through a bunch of stuff you don't care about. You don't have to read the chapters in any particular order; you don't even have to read all of them if you don't want to.

Occasionally, you'll see sidebars — shaded boxes of text that go into detail on a particular topic. You don't have to read these if you're not interested; skipping them won't hamper you in understanding the rest of the text. You

also can skip any information next to the Technical Stuff icon. Again, this information is presented for the intensely curious reader, but you won't be missing anything crucial if you ignore it.

Foolish Assumptions

In putting together the information in this book, we've made some assumptions about you, the reader. We assume that you:

- ✓ Have been diagnosed with COPD, suspect you may have COPD, or have a loved one who has COPD.
- ✓ Want to understand how your lungs work and how your lung function affects the rest of your body.
- ✓ Want information about what a COPD diagnosis means.
- ✓ Want to understand your treatment options.
- ✓ Want to know how you can manage COPD effectively with medication and lifestyle choices.
- ✓ Want tips on how to make the lifestyle choices that will help you manage your COPD.
- ✓ Want a convenient, comprehensive, and easy-to-understand resource that covers all this information without making you feel like a dummy.

How This Book Is Organized

We split this book into five parts to make it easier for you to find the information you're looking for. Here's how it's organized.

Part 1: Every Breath You Take: The Who, What, and Why of COPD

This part covers the mechanics of COPD. We talk about the two lung diseases that comprise COPD — chronic bronchitis and emphysema — as well as other lung ailments that COPD can be mistaken for. We also show you how your lungs normally work and how COPD prevents them from working properly. And we discuss various risk factors for COPD, starting with the number-one risk, smoking, and going right through other risks like exposure to airborne contaminants and a rare but serious genetic condition that almost inevitably leads to COPD.

Part II: Catching Your Breath: Treating COPD

In these chapters, we walk you through the process of diagnosing and treating COPD. We tell you what kinds of tests your doctor may order and how to help determine the severity of your condition. Because COPD patients often suffer from depression, especially when they're first diagnosed, we talk about the common emotional reactions to a COPD diagnosis and give you tips on finding support and coping with your own emotional response.

Because COPD affects virtually every aspect of your life, we show you how to build a health-care team that can address every facet, from medical treatment to diet to exercises designed to help you breathe better. We also discuss the importance of setting goals for your treatment and how to assess your progress.

This part also covers the various medications used to treat COPD symptoms, including why they help, how to use them, and what side effects you may experience from each. We also cover surgical and alternative treatment options and discuss when these options make sense, as well as factors you and your doctor need to consider before using them.

Part III: In the Next Breath: Managing Your Overall Health

Getting the right medications for the problems in your lungs is only part of living with COPD. Quitting smoking, getting appropriate exercise, and making sure you eat a balanced diet that also provides you with enough calories are all critical components of treating your COPD. We show you how these things affect your condition (and how COPD affects these things) and provide information and tips for managing your general health as well as your COPD.

Part IV: Breathing Easier: Living with COPD

COPD robs you of energy. Simple tasks like running the vacuum, taking a stroll, even bathing and getting dressed can seem monumental when you have COPD. In this part, we provide tips for making your daily routine less tiring, showing you how to gauge your energy levels, choose clothing that's more comfortable and meals that are more appetizing, and reorganize your home and daily routine to make life with COPD easier.

This part also provides essential information on preparing for emergencies. Here you find the signs that mean you need medical help immediately.

If you have a loved one with COPD, this part also provides a quick primer to understanding the effects of COPD. This is where you'll find information on what you need to know about your loved one's condition and medications, tips on how you can help your loved one manage the disease, and a guide to help you identify danger signs.

Part V: The Part of Tens

A favorite feature of *For Dummies* books, the Part of Tens gives you quick, easily digestible nuggets of information. Here we present our top-ten lists for living with and understanding COPD, including ten things to avoid when you have COPD and ten common myths about the disease. We also give you ten strategies for coping with COPD on a daily basis, and ten health factors that affect COPD (or vice versa).

Glossary

Although we explain any technical terms in the text, sometimes it's easier to look up an unfamiliar word in a glossary format, rather than having to hunt through the text for the definition. This glossary is intended to be a handy and reasonably thorough guide to understanding what your doctor is talking about.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout the book, you'll find little icons in the margins that alert you to specific kinds of information. Here's what each of the icons means:



This is practical information that you can use right away to make a specific task easier.



This icon indicates information that you may want to file away for future reference.



This little bomb tips you off to potential problems or dangers you should be aware of.



Because everyone's medical needs are different, we use this icon to remind you when you should consult your physician before taking a specific course of action.



When we get into technical medical stuff, we alert you with this icon so you can skip it if you want.

Where to Go from Here

The beauty of Dummies books is that you can use them in whatever way works best for you. You can start with Chapter 1 and work your way to the last page, or you can peruse the table of contents, decide which area seems most interesting or useful to you at the moment, and start your reading there. Either way, our goal is that you find and take away a better understanding of COPD.

Still not sure where to start? Here are our recommendations:

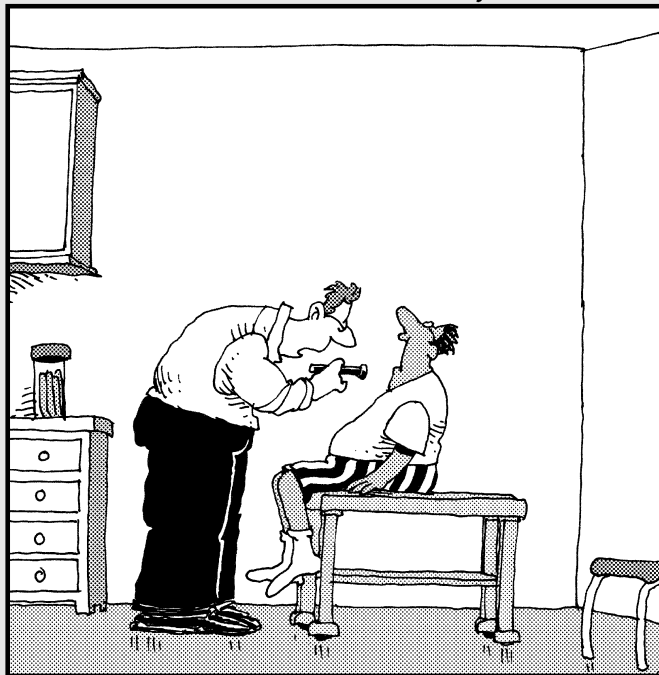
- ✓ If you've just been diagnosed with COPD, head to Chapter 7 for information on treatment goals. Chapter 5 can help you deal with how you feel about the diagnosis, and Chapters 8 and 9 cover various medical treatments.
- ✓ If you're trying to manage your COPD better, go to Chapter 11 for nutrition information and Chapter 12 for information on exercising with COPD.
- ✓ If a loved one has COPD, start with Chapter 17 to find out what you can do to help. You also can use the information in Chapters 14 and 15 to help your loved one remain independent.

Part I

Every Breath You Take: The Who, What, and Why of COPD

The 5th Wave

By Rich Tennant



"I see what's blocking your airway. Apparently, someone said something at some point that just stuck in your craw."

In this part . . .

COPD is often misdiagnosed as asthma or another lung ailment. Because it's a progressive disease, people often don't notice or seek medical treatment for their symptoms until the damage is fairly well advanced. In this part, we explain the differences between COPD and other lung diseases and identify common ways in which early-stage COPD can make its presence felt.

We also take you inside your body's respiratory system to show you how it functions when it's healthy and when it's not, and we look at factors that influence how well your lungs function. Then we give you detailed information about the risk factors for COPD — from smoking to gender to individual medical history — so you can assess how many of these factors apply to you.

Chapter 1

Understanding COPD

In This Chapter

- ▶ Defining what COPD is and isn't
 - ▶ Looking at how COPD affects your body
 - ▶ Understanding COPD's impact on your life
-

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States and the second leading cause of disability. The costs associated with COPD are enormous — more than \$37 billion a year, including \$20 billion a year just in direct healthcare costs. Some 12 million American adults have been diagnosed with COPD, and another 12 million may have it but don't know it.

How can there be so many undiagnosed cases of a life-threatening illness? For the same reason that many diabetics and people with high blood pressure go undiagnosed: The symptoms, especially early on, are so vague that they're easy to ignore. And when COPD symptoms do appear, they can be mistaken for other conditions, like asthma.

In fact, until fairly recently, most people outside the health profession had never heard of COPD, and those who had heard of it very often dismissed it as a “smoker's disease.” Smoking is the number-one risk factor for COPD, but it is by no means the only one. Long-term exposure to dust, chemical fumes, secondhand smoke, and other pollutants can lead to COPD, and there's even a genetic condition that, though rare, can cause the disease.

COPD also was long considered a man's disease. But since 2003, more women than men have died every year from COPD. Many experts attribute this shift to the fact that, while smoking rates among men have dropped over the past two or three decades, the smoking rates for women have crept upward. Women also seem to suffer more than men from many of the health-sapping effects of COPD, so it tends to progress faster in women than it does in men.

That's the insidious thing about COPD: It's a progressive disease. New treatments and better understanding have improved management of its symptoms, but there is no cure, and the average life expectancy after diagnosis is about five years, depending on the severity of the COPD and other health factors.

Faced with these sobering facts, many people feel overwhelmed, even discouraged or depressed, when they first learn they have COPD. But you aren't completely powerless. There are all kinds of steps you can take to manage your COPD symptoms and improve your quality of life. The first step is understanding COPD and how it affects your body.

What COPD Is and Isn't

COPD is an umbrella term covering any long-term, irreversible damage to the lungs that interferes with breathing, specifically with getting air out of the lungs.

If you break the term down into its four parts, here's what *chronic obstructive pulmonary disease* means:

- ✓ *Chronic* means “always present” (as opposed to *acute*, which refers to a short-term condition that disappears after treatment).
- ✓ *Obstructive* means “blocking.”
- ✓ *Pulmonary* refers to the lungs, including the airways and tissues that allow your body to pull in oxygen and push out carbon dioxide and other gases.
- ✓ *Disease* is a condition that harms a specific bodily function and/or your overall health.

So *chronic obstructive pulmonary disease* is a condition in which you have trouble getting air out of your lungs because your airways are continually blocked.

Not being able to get air out is a problem because, when that air is trapped in your lungs, you can't inhale enough air to supply your body with oxygen. (Chapter 2 describes the gas exchange process in detail.) Your body senses that you aren't getting enough oxygen and sends signals telling you to breathe faster to correct the problem. This process is what makes you feel like you can't catch your breath.

Smoking just adds to the problem. Smoking increases mucous production in your lungs and paralyzes the *cilia* — the little “brooms” whose job it is to sweep mucus and particles up your airways so they can be coughed out. Too much mucus clogs the gas-exchange function of your air sacs, so you feel short of breath.

When you can't cough out mucus and particles, you have a higher risk of developing lung infections like pneumonia — a serious problem for COPD patients.