



# Lamont Health Care Centre

Telephone (780) 895-2211 Fax (780) 895-7305  
P.O. Box 479, 5216-53 Street, Lamont, Alberta T0B



## 2012 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER – SUMMER EDITION

### ‘MEDICAL CORNER’

#### **COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease)**

*by Dr. Zainool Mohamed, Chief of Medical Staff - LHCC*

COPD is the fourth leading cause of death in North America. The main cause of COPD is due to exposure to cigarette smoke; however, there is some thought that any kind of smoke or pollution at an early age can cause COPD. COPD is a preventable disease but once a person has COPD, the prevention option does not exist anymore and one must submit to a treatment phase.

Realistically there is no treatment for COPD except for improving lung function. To improve lung function the easiest way is deep breathing exercises; however, a simpler form of deep breathing exercises would be to actually do a cardiovascular workout. For example walking at a relatively fast pace in order to increase the effect of your breathing or cycling on a stationary bicycle or walking on a treadmill at a pace that causes one to breathe deeply is acceptable.

The treatment that is prescribed is not for the treatment of COPD but rather for the symptoms of COPD. The disease of COPD causes two problems: one is chronic bronchitis and that is where a person spits up mucous at any time of the day but usually in the morning; the second is emphysema which is destruction of the lung tissue which causes a person to have shortness of breath.

Chronic bronchitis also narrows the airway. The treatment is aimed at reversing the two processes. The primary treatment could be Ventolin which would allow the airway to open up. A second treatment is Atrovent or Spiriva both of which decrease the amount of mucous that is produced. The third treatment is a steroid which also decreases the amount of mucous and thins out the lining of the airway allowing the person to breathe better. The fourth treatment is Oxygen.

At some stage a person undergoes so much loss of lung tissue that the lung is not adequate to provide enough Oxygen supply to the body. Therefore supplemental Oxygen is necessary to allow a person to continue functioning; namely walking, doing small activities or tasks.

Treatment of COPD is largely unsuccessful. Treatment of symptoms can be fairly successful without changing the eventual outcome of the disease.

COPD is caused by smoking. The main aim of prevention should be to QUIT SMOKING. This improves lung function at all stages of the disease.

Pneumonia and acute bronchitis both cause lung tissue damage and worsening of COPD. Prevention of this can be accomplished by vaccination with Pneumovax and treatment of any respiratory infection with antibiotics. Decreasing exposure to airborne illnesses will also be a prevention strategy. i.e.: Do not associate with people who have colds.

As lung function declines the eventual result is respiratory distress and death. COPD should be screened with easy available tests like a chest x-ray. Deterioration of the disease can be assessed by a lung function test. Concerns can be addressed with your family doctor.

#### **Mission Statement**

We believe that wholeness of body, mind and spirit is God's will for every person.

We are committed to the healing process, the promotion of health

and the provision of compassionate care to all persons.