

Fact Sheet – World Lung Day 2018

The Facts

- 65 million people suffer from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and 3 million die from it each year, making it the third leading cause of death worldwide
- 10 million people develop tuberculosis and 1.8 million die from it each year, making it the most common lethal infectious disease
- 1.6 million people die from lung cancer each year, making it the most deadly cancer
- 334 million people suffer from asthma, making it the most common chronic disease of childhood. It affects 14 percent of children globally – and rising
- Pneumonia kills millions of people each year making it a leading cause of death in the very young and very old
- At least 2 billion people are exposed to toxic indoor smoke; 1 billion inhale polluted outdoor air; and 1 billion are exposed to tobacco smoke
- Passive smoke exposure also leads to respiratory disease. Since 1964, about 2.5 million non-smokers died from health problems caused by exposure to second-hand smoke

Prevention

- Fortunately, most respiratory diseases are PREVENTABLE by improving the quality of the air. Common sources of unhealthy air are tobacco smoke, indoor and outdoor air pollution, and air containing microbes, toxic particles, fumes, or allergens
- Discouraging individuals from starting to smoke tobacco and encouraging smokers to reduce and quit smoking are the first and most important priorities in preventing COPD
- Asthmatics who smoke have a more rapid decline in lung function than lifelong non-smokers.



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- Avoiding smoking during pregnancy and avoidance of passive smoke exposure after birth can reduce asthma severity in children
- Vaccinations are essential for the control and elimination of many childhood respiratory diseases
- Controlling unhealthy air in the workplace can prevent occupational lung disease
- Many cases of TB can be cured if diagnosed early and treated appropriately
- Lung cancer is largely preventable through tobacco control
- Environmental causes of lung cancer, such as radon and asbestos, can be monitored and reduced

The respiratory societies of the world believe that everyone has the right to breathe clean air and we ask lawmakers to enact and ensure clean air standards in all countries.

About the Forum of International Respiratory Societies (FIRS)

[The Forum of International Respiratory Societies](#) (FIRS) is an organisation comprised of the world's leading international respiratory societies working together to improve lung health globally: [American College of Chest Physicians](#) (CHEST), [American Thoracic Society](#) (ATS), [Asian Pacific Society of Respirology](#) (APSR), [Asociación Latino Americana De Tórax](#) (ALAT), [European Respiratory Society](#) (ERS), [International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Diseases](#) (The Union), [Pan African Thoracic Society](#) (PATS), [Global Initiative for Asthma](#) (GINA), and the [Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease](#) (GOLD).

The goal of FIRS is to unify and enhance efforts to improve lung health through the combined work of its more than 70,000 members globally.

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