

## Have you been diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease?

- » Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a term used to describe a group of progressive lung diseases, including emphysema, chronic bronchitis, and refractory asthma.
- » Around 10-30% of people with moderate to severe COPD have elevated pulmonary pressure, which puts them at an increased risk of developing pulmonary hypertension (PH).
- » PH related to COPD is often mild; however, up to 5% of patients with PH related to COPD will develop severe PH.

## What is PH?

- » Pulmonary hypertension (PH) is a disease that can strike anyone regardless of age, sex, or background, with an estimated 10,000 Canadians currently affected. If left untreated, the average life expectancy of someone with PH is less than three years.
- » PH is defined by high blood pressure in the arteries of the lungs, which causes an enlargement and weakness of the right side of the heart. This can lead to heart failure or even death.
- » People with COPD are at risk of developing a type of PH associated with lung disease. In such cases, doctors may focus on treating the underlying lung disease in order to improve or resolve the elevated pressure in the pulmonary arteries.

## Symptoms

- Breathlessness
- Exercise intolerance
- Swollen feet/legs
- Fainting
- Fatigue
- Chest pain
- Light headedness
- Blue lips/fingers

1. **Get informed:** Recognize the symptoms of PH. If you have a history of COPD and are experiencing these symptoms, talk to your doctor about PH.
2. **Get screened:** The primary screening test for PH is an echocardiogram. Additional tests may be required to measure the functioning of your heart and lungs.
3. **Get referred:** There are PH clinics all across Canada. For more information visit [www.SometimesItsPH.ca](http://www.SometimesItsPH.ca).

