



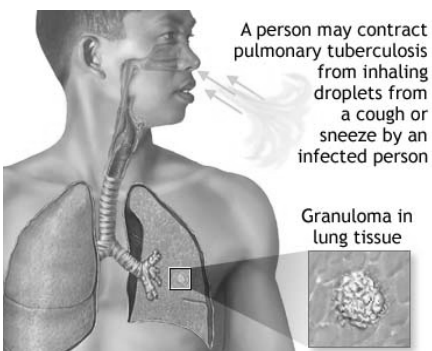
Berrien County Health Department:
Preventing Disease,
Prolonging Life and
Protecting the
Health of the



Protect Yourself from Lung Disease

Asthma: is inflammation of the lung causing airway obstruction in response to various triggers. Asthma triggers vary from person to person but usually are smoke, mold, pollens, dust, animal dander, exercise, cold air, household and industrial pollutants and infection. While the lungs of asthma sufferers are almost continuously inflamed, these and other triggers can lead to spasms in the lungs. The spasms cause coughing, wheezing and shortness of breath and sometimes can be life threatening. Asthma is found in all populations, but it occurs at a higher rate in inner-city African Americans and Hispanic populations.

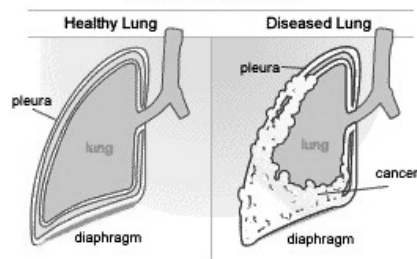
Tuberculosis (TB): is a bacterial infection that usually affects the lungs. The disease is airborne and is spread from person to person through coughing or sneezing. Infection usually requires close contact with someone with active TB over a long period of time. Most people who are infected with the disease will never become sick or have symptoms, but some will develop active TB.



Only people with active TB can infect others. The inactive form is called latent TB and can not infect other people. However persons with latent TB risk developing active TB if they do not receive treatment, so anyone sus-

pected of having latent TB needs to be tested and get treatment. Risk factors are: having HIV/Aids, being foreign born, poverty, drug use, homelessness and living in long-term care facilities. Symptoms are: cough lasting more than 2 weeks, coughing up bloody sputum, fatigue, fever in the afternoon and night sweats.

Lung Cancer: An uncontrolled growth of abnormal cells in one or both the lungs. While normal



lung tissue cells reproduce and develop into healthy lung tissue, in cancer these abnormal cells reproduce rapidly and fail to grow into normal lung tissue. Lumps of cancer cells (tumors) then form and disturb the lung making it difficult for the organ to work properly. Smoking is the main cause of both types of lung cancer; active smoking accounts for about 90% of lung cancer cases. If lung cancer is found relatively early, treatment-surgery, radiation, drug therapy or a combination are sometimes effective.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is a term that refers to emphysema and chronic bronchitis, the most common forms of COPD.

Emphysema causes irreversible lung damage as the walls between the air sacs in the lung lose their ability to stretch and recoil, become weakened and break. Stale air becomes trapped in the

air sacs, and it makes the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide more difficult. Patients with emphysema usually have shortness of breath and develop cough and sputum during a respiratory infection or in later stages of the illness.

Chronic Bronchitis is the presence of a chronic productive cough for three months within the span of two years, provided that other causes of chronic diseases have been ruled out. Like emphysema, people with chronic bronchitis have problems breathing when the airways of the lungs become inflamed and clogged with mucus, usually from environmental irritants. Patients with chronic bronchitis usually have cough sputum for years before they develop shortness of breath.

COPD is easily diagnosed, yet it remains under-diagnosed because it can be present with or without serious physical symptoms. Smoking is the main cause of **COPD, but other risk factors, including air pollution, occupational exposures, and second-hand smoke can worsen the condition.**

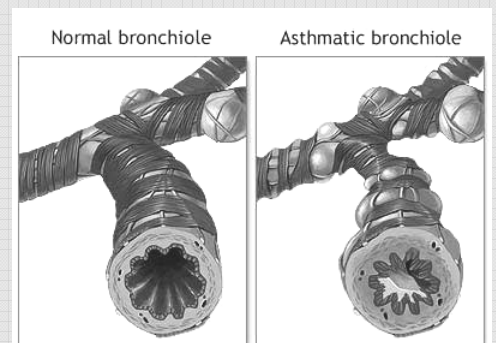
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV): this is the most common cause of severe lower respiratory tract infection in children. RSV is a swelling of the small airways usually occurring during the winter months. It is spread through close contact with infected persons or contact with contaminated surfaces or objects, when infectious material comes in contact with the eyes, mouth or nose. RSV begins with fever, runny nose, cough and sometimes wheezing.

November is Breathe Easy Month

Take a deep breathe! For some this is not as easy as it sounds. This month the health department will bring you information about lung diseases, home breathing hazards, the hazards of smoking and ways to quit, and the Berrien County smoking regulation. For questions about any of these topics, please call the health department at **926-7121**.

If you have Asthma:

- Take appropriate medication as directed by your doctor, especially before exercising or going out in the cold air.
- Reduce environmental triggers in your home, such as contact to smoke, dust and animal dander.
- Be aware of air pollution alerts in your community and protect yourself in bad air days.



Shocking Lung Disease Facts:

- Smoking causes 90% of lung cancer.
- African Americans have the highest asthma rate of any racial or ethnic group and account for 25% of all asthma deaths.
- In 2006, 87 people in Berrien County died of chronic lung diseases.
- It is estimated that 15% of adults in Berrien County have been diagnosed with asthma.
- In 2004, 126 people in Berrien County were diagnosed with lung cancer, and 99 people died of it.

For more information about lung disease or TB testing, call the Health Department at:

926-7121

Special thanks to Pam Quinn, RN, public health nurse for her help with this article.

The Berrien County Health Department has five locations to serve you:

Benton Harbor	M-139 Office	School Based	Niles	Three Oaks
769 Pipestone	M-139 Office	School Based	1205 N. Front St.	21 N. Elm
P.O. Box 706	2106 S. M-139	870 Colfax Ave	684-2800	756-2008
926-7121	927-5623	925-4500		

Or visit us on the web at www.berriencohlthdept.org

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