

DIAGNOSIS OF COPD

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All professional organizations and guidelines recommend the use of spirometry to diagnose COPD. A history of smoking and the presence of symptoms increase the risk of COPD but are inadequate to confirm the diagnosis.

Questions remain regarding: 1) whether or not screening of adult smokers for COPD improves outcomes; 2) whether or not spirometry for case-finding of COPD in the primary care setting enhances smoking cessation rates; 3) the appropriate abnormality thresholds to minimize misclassification; and 4) how to optimally differentiate asthma from COPD (using bronchodilator responsiveness, exhaled nitric oxide, diffusing capacity, induced sputum indices of inflammation, or high-resolution lung CT scans).