… about how important it is to see your doctor

“I would urge anybody with symptoms that might be lung cancer, like a persistent cough, to go and see their doctor straight away. I’m glad I did. I was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2003 and I can still do all the things I did before my treatment, like long walks, swimming and spending time with my family.”

Ann Long, aged 80
Supporter of the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation

“I was working on a building site and was starting to feel more and more out of breath as I went about my work. I was carrying less and less material around and found it hard to get anything done without pausing for breath. I didn’t realise how bad it was and tried to hide it, but my family and workmates began to notice and persuaded me to visit my doctor. I was diagnosed with COPD and now I am receiving treatment for it, things are so much more manageable. I can finally walk reasonable distances again without pausing for breath!”

Alan Cooley, aged 68
Supporter of the British Lung Foundation

… about how to help you stay healthy

A healthy lifestyle can help you feel better and reduce your risk of lung disease, heart disease and cancer. Some examples of what you can do to help you stay healthy are:

**Stop smoking**
If you smoke, the best thing you can do for your health is to quit. There’s plenty of support available from the NHS. Visit nhs.uk/smokefree or call 0300 123 1044.

**Look after yourself**
Try to maintain a healthy weight and keep active. Swimming, cycling, dancing, walking – the more you can do, the better. Try to eat a healthy, balanced diet too, with plenty of fruit and vegetables.

**Cut down on alcohol**
Drinking too much alcohol can lead to a number of health problems. By drinking less, you’ll reduce your health risks.

**More information**
For more information and support on healthy living, visit nhs.uk/oneyou

Unclear on anything?
Visit nhs.uk/beclearoncancer

Do you have either of these symptoms?
Tell your doctor

Dr Ian Watson

Coughing for 3 weeks?
Get out of breath easily?
Lung disease covers a number of conditions including lung cancer and COPD. While smoking is the main cause of lung cancer and COPD, some cases are caused by fumes and air pollution. It’s important to see your doctor if you have these symptoms, and not put them down to “a smoker’s cough” or getting older. These diseases can be treated more effectively the earlier they are diagnosed.

Lung cancer
Lung cancer is one of the most common cancers in England, with around 36,500 new cases every year. It affects people of all ages but is most common in those over 50. Although lung cancer is more common in smokers, around one in eight people with lung cancer has never smoked.

COPD
COPD is the name for a group of lung diseases where people have difficulty breathing, often with frequent coughing. It includes chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

There are over a million people in England who have been diagnosed with COPD but there are many more that are living with the disease who haven’t been diagnosed. This may be because they don’t think their symptoms are serious and so don’t get medical help.

Breathlessness can also be a sign of heart disease. There are around 1.8 million people in England with diagnosed coronary heart disease. Causes of heart disease include smoking, high blood pressure and high cholesterol. The earlier it is diagnosed, the better – treatment can help manage the symptoms and reduce the chance of a heart attack.

Diagnosing lung and heart disease early makes them more treatable. It’s very important to see your doctor if you’ve had a cough for three weeks or more, or if you get out of breath doing things you used to be able to do. It may well be nothing serious but it could be a sign of something else that needs treatment.

You should also see your doctor if you have any of the symptoms below, as they can be signs of lung or heart disease as well.

- A cough that has got worse or changes
- Frequent chest infections
- Coughing up blood
- Chest or shoulder pain
- Wheezing
- Feeling more tired than usual for some time
- Losing weight for no obvious reason

Don’t ignore your symptoms or put off a trip to the doctor. You won’t be wasting anyone’s time by getting them checked out.

And if you know anyone who has any of these symptoms, encourage them to see their doctor.