

New problems tagged to smoking

6 January 2007

Smoking can lead to obstructed airways or lung disease that could surface many years after smokers quit, doctors in Taiwan said.

Sun Yueh, a former actor who gave up smoking 23 years ago, said he was recently diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, the China Post said Friday. Sun, 76, said the diagnosis followed a poor performance on a blowing capacity test.

Medical experts said up to 76 percent of smokers are not aware that they have COPD. Uneven breathing, coughing with mucus, and chest discomfort are among its symptoms.

Yang Pan-chih, deputy superintendent of the National Taiwan University Hospital, who diagnosed COPD, also said Sun had the lung capacity of a 94-year-old person.

Yang said a person's lung capacity reaches its peak at the age of 25, declining about 12 percent each year after middle age. He said deterioration can accelerate when lungs are overwhelmed by air inflow obstruction caused by inflammatory secretions, mucus, and thickening cells.

Sun said he did not realize that smoking 23 years ago could still affect his health.

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