

ASTHMA

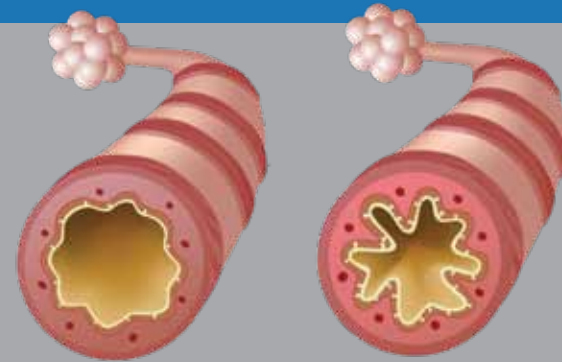
Patient Information

What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the lungs that makes breathing difficult.

In asthma, the following can occur and cause obstruction to airflow:

- Inflammation and swelling of the air passages
- Temporary narrowing of the airways
- Cells of the airway produce more mucus



What are symptoms of asthma?

Common asthma symptoms include:

- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Wheezing — a whistling or squeaky sound
- Chest tightness, pain, or pressure



What causes asthma?

- Chemicals in the air or food
- Animals (pet hair or dander)
- Mold
- Pollen
- Perfumes
- Respiratory infections such as the common cold
- Medications (aspirin and other NSAIDS)
- Dust mites
- Changes in weather
- Exercise



Occupational asthma is caused or worsened by breathing in chemical fumes, gases, dust, or other harmful substances while on the job. Common workplace triggers are wood dust, grain dust, fungi, or chemicals.

Protect yourself with workplace safety controls and wear appropriate personal protective equipment.



How is asthma diagnosed?

- An evaluation by a doctor may include a breathing test and possibly a chest x-ray.
- The doctor will perform a physical exam and ask about your medical history.
- A particular workplace environment or substance may be causing the symptoms to worsen. The doctor may conduct other tests such as an allergy skin prick test to see if there is another possible asthma trigger.



How is asthma controlled?



- Quick-relief medications are inhaled medications taken to provide immediate relief from symptoms of an asthma attack, such as coughing, wheezing, or trouble breathing.
- Long-term medications are inhaled medications used to prevent symptoms in moderate to severe asthma by reducing the swelling or inflammation in the airways.
- Depending on severity of asthma, additional medication may be prescribed by your doctor.
- People with asthma should get an annual flu vaccine. Other vaccines also may be recommended by your doctor.

Lifestyle modifications



- If you are a smoker, talk to us about helping you quit.
- Minimize household allergens such as mold, pollen, dust mites, and pet dander.
- Avoid environmental irritants such as perfume and room scents.
- Eat a balanced diet and maintain a healthy weight.



- Exercise regularly. Talk to your doctor before starting any physical activity.
- Use an appropriate respiratory device to protect or reduce your exposure to pollutants.
- Work with your doctor to create and follow a treatment plan. Know what medication should be taken daily and what to do in case of an emergency.



This information is intended for general reference only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.



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