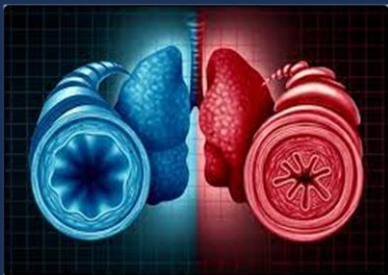




# Asthma

## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a respiratory disease that causes breathing airways to swell and narrow. This can make breathing difficult and trigger coughing, a whistling sound (wheezing) when you breath out and shortness of breath. There is no cure, but you can control your asthma and prevent attacks.



## Asthma Triggers

- ❖ Airborne allergens, such as pollen, dust mites, mold spores, pet dander or particles of cockroach waste
- ❖ Respiratory infections, such as the common cold
- ❖ Physical activity
- ❖ Cold air
- ❖ Air pollutants and irritants, such as smoke
- ❖ Certain medications, including beta blockers, aspirin, and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin IB, others) and naproxen sodium (Aleve)
- ❖ Strong emotions and stress
- ❖ Sulfites and preservatives added to some types of foods and beverages, including shrimp, dried fruit, processed potatoes, beer and wine
- ❖ Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), a condition in which stomach acids back up into your throat

## Prevention

- ❖ Get vaccinated for influenza and pneumonia
- ❖ Identify and avoid asthma triggers
- ❖ Monitor your breathing
- ❖ Identify and treat attack early
- ❖ Take your medication as prescribed
- ❖ Pay attention to increasing quick-relief inhaler use
- ❖ Have an asthma action plan



# Treatment

## What are the risk factors?

- Having a blood relative with asthma
- Having another allergic condition, such as atopic dermatitis or hay fever
- Being overweight
- Being a smoker
- Exposure to secondhand smoke
- Exposure to exhaust fumes or other types of pollution
- Exposure to occupational triggers such as chemicals used in farming, hairdressing, and manufacturing

## Diagnosis

Lung function tests often are done before and after taking a medication to open your airways called a bronchodilator (brong-koh-DIE-lay-tur), such as albuterol. If your lung function improves with use of a bronchodilator, it's likely you have asthma. Additional tests include spirometry, peak flow, methacholine challenge, imaging tests, allergy testing, nitric oxide testing, sputum eosinophils or provocative testing for exercise and cold-induced asthma.

## Asthma Classification

**Mild Intermittent:** Mild symptoms up to two days a week and up to two nights a month

**Mild Persistent:** Symptoms more than twice a week, but no more than once in a single day

**Moderate Persistent:** Symptoms once a day and more than one night a week

**Severe Persistent:** Symptoms throughout the day on most days and frequent at night.

\*\*\*A basic rule of asthma therapy is that the intensity of treatment should match the severity of asthmatic symptoms\*\*\*

## Treatment

**Long-term asthma control medications:** These medications keep asthma under control on a day-to-day basis and make it less likely you'll have an asthma attack.

**Quick-relief (rescue) medications:** These are used as needed for rapid, short-term symptom relief during an asthma attack.

**Allergy medications:** These may help if your asthma is triggered or worsened by allergies.