

What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the airways (breathing tubes) in your lungs.

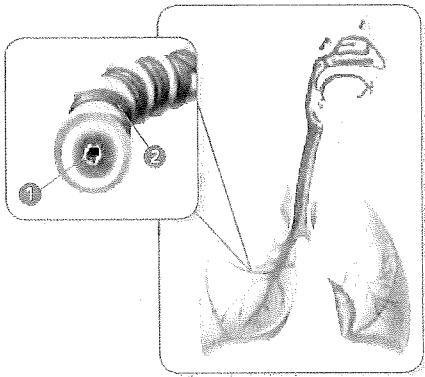
What does asthma feel like?

The main symptoms of asthma are coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath during the day and night.

What happens when you have asthma symptoms?







Two main things are happening when you have symptoms:

1. The airways swell and fill with mucus.
2. The muscles around the airways tighten. This makes the airways smaller.



What triggers asthma flare-ups?

Many common things may cause asthma flare-ups. These are called "triggers" and include:

-  Infections, such as colds or viruses
-  Allergens like dust mites, molds, pollen, and animal dander
-  Cigarette smoke and air pollution
-  Exercise
-  Weather changes
-  Strong emotions such as being upset or stressed

What are the goals for asthma care?

Effective asthma management can help control your symptoms. People with asthma should be able to sleep well at night and be active all day. The goals of asthma care include:

- Have few or no asthma symptoms during the day and the night.
- Reduce or eliminate asthma attacks.
- Have no limitations on activities—no missed school or work days.
- Use a quick-relief (rescue) inhaler less often and not more than twice a week.
- Maintain normal or almost normal lung function.

How can I help keep my asthma under control?

- Take your asthma medicine as directed by your doctor. Even though asthma cannot be cured, an effective management plan can help control your asthma symptoms.
- Talk to your doctor and pharmacist about what starts, or triggers, your asthma flare-ups. Stay away from these triggers.

How can I remember to refill my medicine on time?

- 1 Mark a calendar and/or set a reminder on your cell phone with *"Refill on [date]."* Choose a date about a week before you will run out.
- 2 Use the dose counter, if your asthma medicine has one, to keep track of the doses you have taken.
- 3 Make sure you have enough refills to last you until your next doctor visit.
- 4 Ask your pharmacy to send you reminders to refill your prescription.



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