

ASTHMA

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease that affects the airways in your lungs. The airways become inflamed or swollen which causes them to react easily to certain things (smoke, pollen, viruses). This reaction causes the airways to become narrow and makes it hard for you to breathe.

What Causes Asthma?

1. Hereditary factors
2. Environmental exposures
3. No known cause

What Are Asthma Triggers?

1. Allergens (animal dander, mold, pollen, cockroaches, dust mites)
2. Air pollutants
3. Cigarette smoke
4. Cold air or changes in the weather
5. Strong odors, scented products, or, chemicals
6. Respiratory infections
7. Physical exertion
8. Strong emotions (crying, laughing hard) and stress
9. Certain medications
10. Sulfites (preservative added to some food or beverages)
11. GERD

What are the Symptoms?

1. Wheezing
2. Coughing
3. Chest tightness
4. Shortness of breath
5. Faster breathing or noisy breathing

How is it Diagnosed?

1. Complete history and physical
2. Pulmonary function test
3. Chest X-Ray

How is it Treated?

1. Fast acting/rescue inhalers (bronchodilators)
2. Inhaled and/or oral corticosteroids
3. Specialized medications

Living With Asthma:

1. No smoking
2. Stay indoors when pollen high
3. Wear a scarf over you nose and mouth when out in cold weather
4. Stay away from allergens and irritants
5. Take medications as prescribed
6. Wash sheets, blankets, pillows weekly with hot water
7. Follow up with physician regularly

