

FACT SHEET

Asthma

Asthma is an inflammatory (swollen) condition of the bronchial airways. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be managed so that it does not get in the way of a person's normal activities.



During an asthma episode (attack):

- The lining of the airways becomes swollen
- The airways produce a thick mucus
- The muscles around the airways tighten and make the airways narrower, so it's more difficult to breathe
- In asthma, each person feels a different level of breathing difficulty

Signs and symptoms:

- Difficulty taking a deep breath
- Wheezing
- Tightness or a heavy feeling in the chest
- Cough lasting more than a week
- Cough during most nights or after physical activity
- Frequent respiratory infections (chest colds, bronchitis, and the like)

An asthma trigger is any thing or condition that causes the airways to swell, which then leads to asthma symptoms.

Some common asthma triggers are:

- Secondhand smoke
- Mold
- Pests, such as cockroaches, mice, and other rodents
- Pet dander, urine, and saliva (such as dogs and cats)
- Strong smells from perfumes, candles, or cleaning products
- Allergies
- Colds or other sicknesses



If you have asthma, talk with your health care provider about setting up an Asthma Action Plan. This is a plan that helps you know how serious your symptoms are, and how to best manage those symptoms. There are many actions and medicines you can take to help you lead an active life.