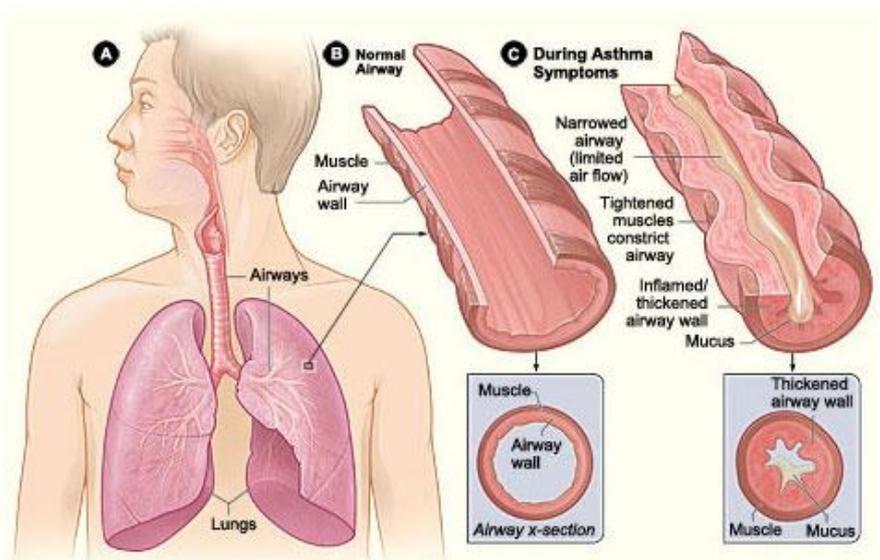


*Fact sheet by EASY BREATH ( a division of Medusoft Pty Ltd )*

## Asthma

Asthma is a chronic respiratory disease. People who have asthma suffer from inflamed airways. When an asthma attack occurs, the smooth muscle cells in the bronchial tubes constrict, the airway tubes become inflamed, swollen and very sensitive and tend to react strongly to certain inhaled substances.

When the airways react, the muscles around them tighten. This narrows the airways, causing less air to flow into the lungs. The swelling can worsen, making the airways even narrower. Cells in the airways may make more mucus than normal. Mucus is a sticky, thick liquid that can further narrow your airways.



This chain reaction can result in asthma symptoms where breathing is difficult and symptoms usually displayed include night-time coughing, shortness of breath with exertion, a chronic 'throat-clearing' type cough, and complaints of a tight feeling in the chest

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### **Symptoms can happen each time the airways are inflamed.**

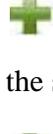
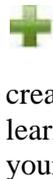
Sometimes, asthma symptoms are mild and go away on their own or after minimal treatment with an asthma medicine. Other times, symptoms continue to get worse. When symptoms get more intense and/or more symptoms occur, you're having an asthma attack. Asthma attacks also are called flare-ups or exacerbations.

It's important to treat symptoms when you first notice them. This will help prevent the symptoms from worsening and causing a severe asthma attack. Severe asthma attacks may require emergency care, and they can be fatal.

## Outlook

**Asthma can't be cured.** Even when you feel fine, you still have the disease and it can flare up at any time. However, with today's knowledge and treatments, most people who have asthma are able to manage the disease. They have few, if any, symptoms. They can live normal, active lives and sleep through the night without interruption from asthma.

## Key Points

-  Asthma is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways and makes them more reactive to certain inhaled substances. The exact cause of asthma isn't known.
-  Asthma affects people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood.
-  Asthma causes recurring periods of wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. The coughing often occurs at night or early in the morning.
-  Sometimes symptoms are mild and go away on their own or after minimal treatment. Other times, the symptoms continue to get worse. When symptoms get more intense and/or more symptoms occur, you're having an asthma attack.
-  It's important to treat asthma symptoms when you first notice them. This will help prevent the symptoms from worsening and causing a severe attack. Severe asthma attacks may require emergency care, and they can be fatal.
-  Your doctor will diagnose asthma based on your medical history, a physical exam, and test results. Asthma is hard to diagnose in children younger than 5 years old.
-  There's no cure for asthma. Asthma is a long-term disease that requires long-term care. Successful asthma treatment requires you to take an active role in your care. Learn how to manage your asthma, get ongoing care, and watch for signs that your asthma is getting worse.
-  The goal of asthma treatment is to control the disease by following the asthma action plan you create with your doctor and Salt Therapy respiratory nurse, taking asthma medicines as prescribed, learning what things make your asthma worse (asthma triggers) and taking steps to avoid them, tracking your level of asthma control, and responding quickly to worsening symptoms.
-  One asthma trigger you should not avoid is physical activity. Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. Talk with your doctor about medicines that can help you stay active.
-  Asthma is treated with two types of medicines: long-term control medicines and quick-relief medicines. You use a device called an inhaler to take many of these medicines. This device allows the medicine to go directly to your lungs.
-  The amounts and types of medicine you need to treat your asthma depend on how well controlled your asthma is when you're closely following your asthma action plan. Your medicines may need to be adjusted over time.
-  Track your asthma by recording your symptoms, using a peak flow meter, and getting regular asthma checkups. Let your doctor know if your asthma is getting worse. If you have trouble walking or talking because you're out of breath, or if you have blue lips or fingernails, call emergency care.
-  Most people who have asthma are able to manage the disease. They have few, if any, symptoms and can live normal, active lives.