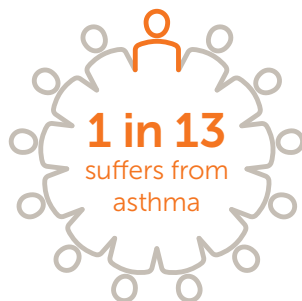


ASTHMA



Did you know that, while our brain is only about 2% of our body mass, it consumes 20% of the oxygen that we breathe in? Just 5 minutes without oxygen can cause noticeable brain damage.

Asthma is often characterized by coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness or pressure. According to the CDC, 1 in 13 people suffers from asthma. It is characterized by the inflammation of the bronchial tubes in your lungs with increased production of mucus. This causes less air to be taken in, with less oxygen to be distributed throughout the body.



Asthma can be hereditary, so it is beneficial to know family health history. It is also connected to other allergic conditions like atopic dermatitis or hay fever. If your loved one is prone to allergic reactions and begins to have trouble breathing, have a doctor determine if they have developed asthma as well. Asthma is more commonly seen in adults with occupations that subject them to airborne chemicals, such as those used in farming, salon work, or manufacturing.

Source: [University of Rochester Medical Center](#)



How to Control Asthma

- Prescription drugs
- Monitor lung capacity with regular doctor visits
- Use a Peak Flow Meter at home
- Develop an asthma action plan with your doctor
- Use a rescue inhaler or nebulizer when necessary
- Stop smoking and vaping
- Exercise regularly to maintain a healthy weight and help with breathing

Source: [Cleveland Clinic](#)

Common Asthma Triggers

- Airborne allergens, such as pollen, dust mites, mold spores, pet dander, or bug waste
- Respiratory infections, including the common cold
- Physical activity
- Cold air
- Air pollutants, such as smog and smoke
- Some medications including beta blockers, aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen sodium
- Strong emotions or stress
- Sulfites
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

Source: [Mayo Clinic](#)



Asthma Attacks

While they may generally have trouble breathing, people who suffer from asthma are most concerned with preventing an attack, a sudden onset of severe symptoms.

Early signs of an attack include:

- Frequent cough, especially at night
- Losing their breath easily or shortness of breath
- Feeling very tired or weak when exercising
- Wheezing or coughing after exercise
- Feeling tired, easily upset, grouchy, or moody
- Signs of a cold or allergies (sneezing, runny nose, cough, nasal congestion, sore throat, and headache)
- Trouble sleeping



If your loved one has an asthma action plan, generally including an inhaler and breathing treatments, it is critical to intervene during these early symptoms.

If you notice that the inhaler is needed multiple times a day or becomes a challenge for your loved one, talk with the doctor about alternatives such as a nebulizer or oral medications.

The attack can also include some or all of the following:

- Severe wheezing when breathing both in and out
- Very rapid breathing
- Chest pain or pressure
- Tightened neck and chest muscles, called retractions
- Coughing that won't stop
- Difficulty talking
- Feelings of anxiety or panic
- Pale, sweaty face
- Blue lips or fingernails



Gradually, the lungs will tighten so there is not enough air movement to produce wheezing. It is at this point that hospital intervention is critical. Some people interpret the disappearance of wheezing as a sign of improvement and fail to get prompt emergency care.

Source: [WebMD](#) and [Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America](#)



Who Does Asthma Affect?

Asthma can affect children and adults. Symptoms are typically more intermittent in children and persistent in adults.

Unfortunately, adult-onset asthma has a higher death rate than childhood asthma. This is perhaps because symptoms are ignored by the adult or their caretakers and attributed to weight or just a regular part of getting older. Do not ignore wheezing or coughing, especially if it seems chronic. It is important to seek medical advice to ensure that shortness of breath is not something more serious.

Some of the factors that might increase the risk of adult-onset asthma may include:

- Being overweight
- Pregnancy or menopause
- A buildup of allergens such as cats, cigarette smoke, chemicals, mold, or dust

Childhood asthma will often go into remission for a decade or so then return in a person's 30s or 40s. Remember that asthma does not have a cure. It is important to maintain the medical relationships and awareness throughout your lifetime.

Source: [Cleveland Clinic](#)