

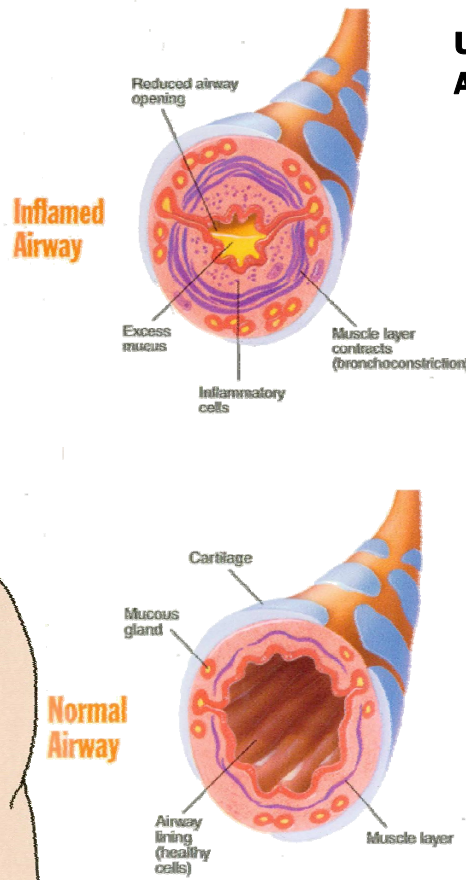
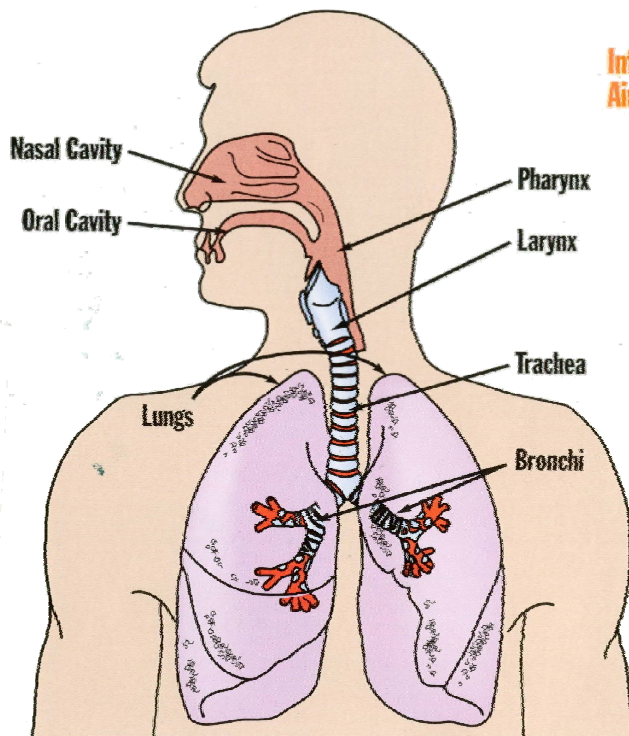
What is **ASTHMA**?

ASTHMA is a lung disease. It involves the air passages that allow air to go in and out of the lungs. Normal airways are wide open so air can go in and out easily. With ASTHMA, the airways are narrow, so it is harder for the air to go in and out.

Asthma causes inflammation, or swelling, of the airways. When swelling occurs, this causes wheezing, chest tightness and cough along with increased mucus in the airways. Inflammation is caused by breathing anything that is irritating to the lungs. . . called triggers.

The treatment for ASTHMA is to figure out your triggers and stay away from them. Medications are used to control ASTHMA since there is no cure. ASTHMA is a genetic disease. This means we get it from our family. It is very common. One out of every 20 people has ASTHMA. Medicines are used to “control” asthma—there is no “cure” and it may be life long.

Respiratory System



Untreated/Under-treated Asthma

- Chest Tightness
- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Out of breath/unable to breathe
- Limited ability to perform activities
- Waking up at night with bronchitis or cough

Effectively Treated Asthma

- No Chest Tightness
- Normal breathing
- Able to perform tasks and everyday activities
- (no restrictions)

Asthma can happen at any stage of life.

Rules of Two*

*Adapted from “Rules of Two”, a trademark of the Baylor Health Care System.

- Do you use a quick reliever (Albuterol) more than 2 times a week?
- Do you awaken at night due to **ASTHMA** more than 2 times per month?
- Do you refill your quick—reliever (Albuterol) prescription more than 2 times per year?
- If you answered “YES” to any of these questions, it’s a sign that your **ASTHMA** is poorly controlled.
- Please see your doctor or **ASTHMA** specialist for information about **ASTHMA**.

What happens during an ASTHMA Episode?

When you breathe, air goes in and out of your lungs through little tubes called airways. When you have **ASTHMA**, your airways are sensitive. They may get smaller when you are around things that trigger your **ASTHMA** like pets, dust, and smoke. This makes it hard for you to breathe. You may cough and make wheezing sounds. This is called a “**flare-up**”.

Two main things happen:

- Muscles tighten around the airways. This makes the airways smaller.
- The inside of the airways swells and makes extra mucus. (inflammation)

What to do during an **ASTHMA flare-up**:

- Take a quick reliever medicine
- Relax. Stay calm and try to breathe slow and deep.
- Get help when you need it. Tell someone if you notice its getting hard to breathe.

Warning Signs of a Flare-Up

Coughing
Wheezing
Tight Chest
Shortness of Breath
Waking up at Night

Danger Signs: When to Call the Doctor

- *It’s hard to talk and walk.
- *Breathing is hard and fast.
- *Lips or fingernails are gray or blue.
- *Nose opens wide when breathing.
- *Ribs and neck muscles show when breathing.
- *Heart rate is very fast.
- *Quick reliever medicine is not helping.
- *Peak flow reading is in the red zone.

No matter how often you have asthma symptoms, you must keep your quick reliever medicine handy in case of an attack. Patients who have any severity of asthma are still at risk for death if the disease is not under control.

Here are ways to control your asthma and prevent an asthma episode:

1. Visit your primary care provider regularly.
2. Avoid triggers that may cause you to have an episode.
3. Watch for warning signs that an asthma episode may be on the way. Act quickly to stop it from happening.

If you have an asthma episode:

1. Stay calm and relaxed.
2. Follow the plan your primary care provider told you.
3. **DO NOT** drink a lot of water. Just drink normal amounts.
4. **DO NOT** breathe warm, moist air from a shower.
5. **DO NOT** *rebreathe* into a paper bag held over the nose.
6. **DO NOT** use non-prescription medicines without calling the doctor first.