



ASTHMA

- **Asthma is a chronic lung disease that narrows the airways and causes shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, and coughing.** It can begin in childhood or as an adult. It may run in families. While there is no cure, asthma can be treated and managed. The goal of treatment is for you to lead a normal active life.
- **What can trigger an asthma attack?**
 - Allergens (air pollution, dust, mold, pollen, pet dander)
 - Strong emotions or stress
 - Heartburn
 - Vigorous exercise
 - Respiratory infections or the flu
 - Strong scents (perfumes, cleaning products, chemicals)
 - Smoke (tobacco or wood smoke)
 - Very cold or very dry weather

Avoid these things if you are sensitive to them

- **What medicines treat asthma?**
 - **Quick relief medication** – relaxes your airways rapidly (in 5-10 minutes)
 - Usually albuterol; is given with an inhaler or nebulizer machine
 - *Is not meant to be used every day, only when needed*
 - Tell your doctor if you need your quick relief medicine more than 2 days per week, or if you have needed it 3-4 times in one day. You may need a long-term control medication.
 - **Long-term control medication** – does not give rapid results but helps with long-term symptom control
 - Steroid inhaler or Anti-inflammatory inhaler
 - *MUST be used daily to be effective – takes several days of use before symptoms change*
 - Sometimes steroid pills or shots are used to stop a bad asthma attack.
- **Get medical help IMMEDIATELY if:**
 - Your quick relief medicine isn't helping your symptoms
 - You have trouble walking or talking
 - You have extreme difficulty breathing
 - Your nostrils flare or your neck, chest, or ribs are pulled in when you breathe
 - Your fingernails or lips turn blue