



What is asthma and what can you do about it?

What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease that can make it hard for you to breathe at times. Asthma affects the airways that carry the air you breathe down into your lungs. When you have asthma, your airways can get irritated and swollen. This can lead to an asthma attack.

What is an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is a serious problem with breathing. When you have an asthma attack, it's hard to get enough air into and out of your lungs. Your chest feels tight. You may cough and wheeze ("wheeze" means making noise when you breathe). Coughing and wheezing might wake you up at night.

What causes asthma?

No one really knows what causes asthma. You can get asthma at any age. Once you have asthma, it doesn't go away, although it may get much better at times. There is no cure for asthma, but there are ways to keep it under control.

What can you do to help keep your asthma under control?

- **Take your "daily control" asthma medicine every day.** Your daily control medicine helps keep you from having asthma attacks.
- **When you have an asthma attack, use your "rescue" medicine.** Your rescue medicine gives you quick relief when you are having an asthma attack.
- **Try to stay away from the things that cause your asthma attacks.** Things that cause asthma attacks are called asthma "triggers." Asthma triggers are different for each person with asthma.
- **See your doctor for checkups and any time your asthma gets worse.** You should see your doctor at least twice a year for regular checkups. Your doctor also needs to know whenever you are having problems with asthma.

If you have asthma, can you still have a normal, active life?

Yes. When you keep your asthma under control, you can have a normal, active life. You can work, play, and sleep well at night.