

Prevention and long-term control are key in stopping asthma attacks. Treatment usually involves learning to recognize triggers, taking steps to avoid them and tracking the child's breathing to make sure daily asthma medications are keeping symptoms under control. In case of an asthma flare-up, the child may need to use a quick-relief inhaler, such as a Ventolin puff.

Other treatments includes

- ◆ Nebulization;
- ◆ Steroids;
- ◆ Allergy medication;
- ◆ After attack has subsided: start using the aero-chamber.

### Take Home tips on Asthma

Children with asthma should be taken seriously. Severe symptoms can be fatal. With proper treatment, most people with asthma can expect to have few, or less symptoms throughout their life.

Our advice is:

- ◆ Continue using home medications for the child as prescribed;
- ◆ Have regular check-ups;
- ◆ Refill prescriptions when need to.

## Contact information

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# Asthma



**SAFETY**  
**HEALTH**  
**SATISFACTION**

*The pillars defining our quality care*

*We Care Together!*



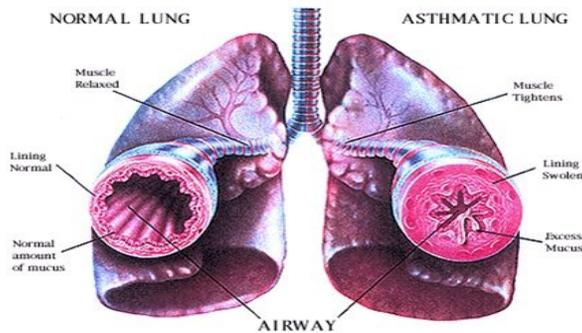
*St. Maarten Medical Center*

## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways. When the airways react, the muscles around them tighten causing less air to flow into the lungs.

Asthma affects people of all ages, but most often starts during childhood. Asthma has no cure. An asthma attack can happen at anytime in a child's life.

### Causes & Triggers



Base on research the exact cause of asthma is unknown. It is proven that there are some genetic and environmental factors that interact in the causing of asthma, most often early in life. These factors include:

- ◆ An inherited tendency to develop allergies;
- ◆ Parents who have asthma;
- ◆ Certain respiratory infections during childhood;
- ◆ Contact with some airborne allergens or exposure to some viral infections;
- ◆ Exposure to smoking.

## Triggers

Common asthma triggers include:

- ◆ Animals;
- ◆ Aspirin;
- ◆ Cold air, such as changes in weather (most often cold weather);
- ◆ Chemical in the air or food;
- ◆ Dust;
- ◆ Exercise;
- ◆ Mold;
- ◆ Pollen;
- ◆ Strong emotions.
- ◆ Tobacco smoke
- ◆ Viral infections, such as the common cold



## Symptoms

Sometimes some people under estimate the symptoms for a starting of a bad flu, whereas it can be the start of an asthma attack. Common symptoms are:

- ◆ Shortness of breath;
- ◆ Frequent coughing;
- ◆ Gasping for air;
- ◆ Having trouble breathing out;
- ◆ Breathing faster than normal.

When breathing gets very difficult, the skin of your child's chest and neck may suck inward.

Other symptoms of asthma in children include:

- ◆ Coughing that sometimes wakes the child up at night (it may be the only symptom);
- ◆ Dark bags under the eyes;
- ◆ Feeling tired;
- ◆ Irritability;
- ◆ Tightness in the chest;
- ◆ Wheezing (a whistling sound made when breathing, that may be more noticeable when the child breathes out);
- ◆ Nasal flaring, use of accessory muscles for respiration, hypercapnia (increase carbon dioxide) vomiting, anxiety, coughing, low saturation,

The type and pattern of asthma symptoms may vary. They may occur often or only when certain triggers are present. Some children are more likely to have asthma symptoms at night.

## Complications

Asthma complications include:

- ◆ Symptoms that interfere with sleep or recreational activities;
- ◆ Sick days from school during asthma flare-ups;
- ◆ Permanent narrowing of the bronchial tubes (airway remodeling) that affects how well you can breathe;
- ◆ Emergency room visits and hospitalizations for severe asthma attacks;
- ◆ Side effects from long-term use of some medications used to stabilize severe asthma.

Proper treatment makes a big difference in preventing both short-term and long-term complications caused by asthma.

## Treatment