

Asthma

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the lungs in which the airways become blocked or narrowed causing breathing difficulty. These effects are usually temporary, but they cause shortness of breath, breathing trouble, and other symptoms. Asthma is commonly divided into two types: allergic (extrinsic) asthma and non-allergic (intrinsic) asthma. If an asthma episode is severe, a person may need emergency treatment to restore normal breathing. This chronic disease affects over 20 million Americans.

Common Treatments

- Oral Medications
- Inhaled Medications
- Breathing Treatments
- Staying away from triggers or eliminating them from the home



What causes Asthma?

Since asthma has a genetic origin and is a disease you are born with, passed down from generation to generation, the question isn't really, "what causes asthma," but rather, "what causes asthma symptoms to appear?" People with asthma have inflamed airways which are super sensitive to things which do not bother people. These things are called "triggers." Some of the most common triggers include:

- Substances that cause allergies—such as dust mites, pollens, molds, pet dander, and even cockroach droppings.
- Irritants in the air—smoke from cigarettes, wood fires, charcoal grills, household sprays, paint, gasoline, perfumes, and scented soaps.
- Respiratory Infections—colds, flu, sore throats, and sinus infections.
- Weather—such as dry wind, cold air, or sudden changes in weather can sometimes bring on an asthma episode.
- Expressing strong emotions—like anger, fear, or excitement. When you experience strong emotions, your breathing changes even when you do not have asthma.
- Some medications—aspirin has been related to episodes in adults who are sensitive to aspirin.

If you are experiencing difficulty breathing or if you have any questions about asthma, please contact your doctor.



For physician referral or health questions, call Dial-A-Nurse: (205) 937-7878 or (7800) 377-6777.