



Breathe well

Asthma tips

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 235 million people suffer from asthma globally.¹

While living with asthma certainly isn't easy, it can be controlled. There are plenty of steps you can take to improve your condition so you'll have fewer or milder symptoms while enjoying a healthy, active life.

Know the triggers

Although the basic causes of asthma are not completely understood, the strongest risk factors for developing asthma are all around us in the air we breathe. By knowing the triggers, you can educate yourself about how to help prevent attacks.

Some common triggers include:

- Indoor allergens, such as dust mites in bedding, carpets and furniture, and pet dander
- Outdoor allergens, such as pollen and mold
- Tobacco smoke
- Chemical irritants

Other triggers can include cold air, physical exercise and even certain medications such as aspirin. The key to controlling asthma is working closely with your doctor to learn what to do, staying away from things that irritate your airways, taking medications directed by your doctor and monitoring your asthma so you can respond quickly to signs of an attack.

Know the warning signs

Asthma has a way of telling you it's about to go on the attack. You can look for these warning signs to help you avoid a potential attack:

- Awakening at night
- Coughing, especially at night
- Difficulty breathing, or getting out of breath easily
- Chest tightening or pain
- Wheezing
- Fatigue
- Itchy, watery or glassy eyes
- Itchy, scratchy or sore throat
- Sneezing
- Dark under-eye circles
- Stuffy head or headache
- Restlessness
- Need for more rescue medication than normal

¹ World Health Organization Asthma Fact Sheet N°307. Available at www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs307/en/index.html. Accessed 23 January 2017.

Know when to get help

Now that you know the triggers and symptoms of asthma in general, it's time to get specific. Work with your doctor to understand your asthma, your triggers and your personal action plan.

Your doctor can:

- Talk with you about your treatment goals, and how best to reach them
- Give you a written asthma action plan, and teach you how to use it
- Discuss the medications you should be taking, including how much to take, when to take it and any possible side effects
- Demonstrate how to take your medicines
- Show you how to monitor your asthma
- Help figure out your triggers, and how you can avoid them
- Describe the warning signs of an asthma attack, and what to do if you have one

Take charge of your asthma —
get on the path to a healthier you today.

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