

# Facts About Asthma

## What is Asthma?

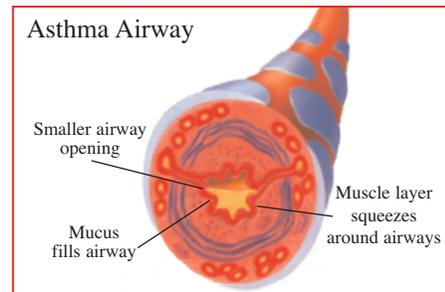
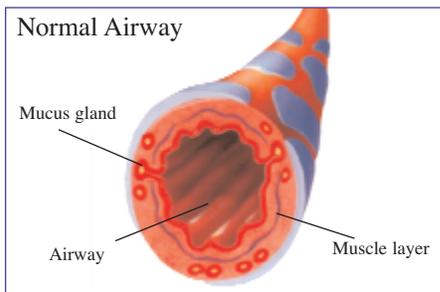
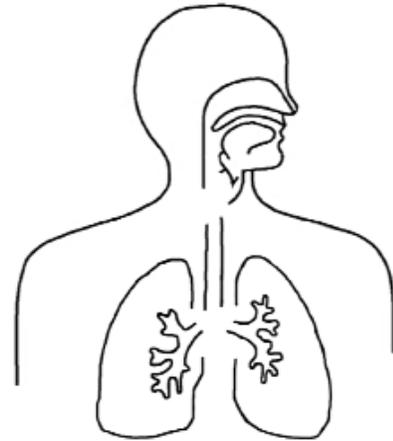
Asthma is a life-long disease that can make it hard to get air in and out of the lungs. Asthma triggers make the air tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs get smaller.

## How does asthma make it hard to breathe?

- Breathing tubes in the lungs swell and make extra mucus
- Muscles around the breathing tubes get tight and make them smaller
- Smaller breathing tubes then get clogged with the extra mucus
- Swelling, muscle tightness and mucus make it harder to breathe
- Coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or pain may start

Not all asthma flare-ups are the same. Some are worse than others. In severe asthma flare-ups, breathing tubes get so small that air cannot get in and out of the lungs.

*People can die if an asthma flare-up is severe.*



## What triggers an asthma attack?

Tell your doctor about the things that make your asthma worse

- Breathing in chemicals, dusts, fumes
- Colds, flu, or respiratory infections
- Animals
- Cockroaches
- Dust
- Mice
- Pollen and mold
- Food allergies (nuts, dairy products, etc.)
- Strong odors
- Climate changes (weather, temperature, etc.)
- Exercise
- Cigarette, wood, and other smoke
- Medicines: \_\_\_\_\_
- Other things: \_\_\_\_\_

## How should asthma be managed?

Talk to your doctor about setting up an Asthma Action Plan to help you manage your asthma. Keep copies of your Asthma Action Plan at school, work, and home.

- **Quick-relief/rescue medicine:** should help for about four hours; relaxes muscles around the breathing tubes so air can get in and out. If quick-relief medicine is needed more than two times per week, asthma is not under control. Ask a doctor about long-term control medicine.
- **Long-term control medicine:** must be taken every day to work right. It keeps the breathing tubes from swelling, preventing most asthma flare-ups. *This medicine can't stop a flare-up once it starts.* During flare-ups, use quick-relief medicine right away and take long-term control medicine as usual.
- **Steroid pills or syrup:** can help swelling in the breathing tubes go away. This medicine must be taken as the doctor says. DON'T skip a dose, and DON'T stop taking it unless a doctor says to stop.

*If the doctor provides an extra round of steroid pills or syrup, always call the doctor before using.*

# Asthma Action Plan



## General Information:

■ Name \_\_\_\_\_

■ Emergency contact \_\_\_\_\_ Phone numbers \_\_\_\_\_

■ Physician/Health Care Provider \_\_\_\_\_ Phone numbers \_\_\_\_\_

■ Physician Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Severity Classification

- Mild Intermittent    Moderate Persistent  
 Mild Persistent    Severe Persistent

### Triggers

- Colds    Smoke    Weather  
 Exercise    Dust    Air pollution  
 Animals    Food  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Exercise

1. Pre-medication (how much and when) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Exercise modifications \_\_\_\_\_

## Green Zone: Doing Well

### Peak Flow Meter Personal Best = \_\_\_\_\_

#### Symptoms

- Breathing is good  
■ No cough or wheeze  
■ Can work and play  
■ Sleeps all night

#### Control Medications

Medicine	How Much to Take	When To Take It
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

#### Peak Flow Meter

More than 80% of personal best or \_\_\_\_\_

## Yellow Zone: Getting Worse

### Contact Physician if using quick relief more than 2 times per week.

#### Symptoms

- Some problems breathing  
■ Cough, wheeze or chest tight  
■ Problems working or playing  
■ Wake at night

#### Continue control medicines and add:

Medicine	How Much to Take	When To Take It
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

#### Peak Flow Meter

Between 50 to 80% of personal best or  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

#### IF your symptoms (and peak flow, if used) return to Green Zone after one hour of the quick relief treatment, THEN

- Take quick-relief medication every 4 hours for 1 to 2 days  
 Change your long-term control medicines by \_\_\_\_\_  
 Contact your physician for follow-up care

#### IF your symptoms (and peak flow, if used) DO NOT return to the GREEN ZONE after 1 hour of the quick relief treatment, THEN

- Take quick-relief treatment again  
 Change your long-term control medicines by \_\_\_\_\_  
 Call your physician/Health Care Provider within \_\_\_\_\_ hours of modifying your medication routine

## Red Zone: Medical Alert

### Ambulance/Emergency Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Symptoms

- Lots of problems breathing  
■ Cannot work or play  
■ Getting worse instead of better  
■ Medicine is not helping

#### Continue control medicines and add:

Medicine	How Much to Take	When To Take It
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

#### Peak Flow Meter

Between 0 to 50% of personal best or  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

#### Go to the hospital or call for an ambulance if

- Still in the red zone after 15 minutes  
 If you have not been able to reach your physician/health care provider for help  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### Call an ambulance immediately if the following danger signs are present

- Trouble walking/talking due to shortness of breath  
 Lips or fingernails are blue