



Take control of your asthma

What asthma feels like

Asthma is a condition where your airways get inflamed. The inflammation causes mucus to build up in the airways. And it makes it hard to move air in and out of your lungs.

So you may have:

- Trouble breathing, especially with exercise
- A whistle-like wheeze
- A nagging cough
- Soreness or tightening in your chest

Keep a symptoms journal

You may need to take a few tests for your doctor to know if you have asthma. Even then, the best clue is how well you describe your symptoms at your visit. It's a good idea to keep an asthma journal so you don't forget.

Write down:

- The symptom, and when and where you were when it happened
- What could have triggered it
- How long it lasted

This only takes a minute. But it can help you and your doctor put together an action plan to get your asthma under control. And to help you breathe a little easier.

Know your triggers

A trigger is something that causes your asthma to flare up. For some, it's cats or dogs. For others, it's pollen. Other triggers are:

- Dust mites
- Mold
- Smoke

Avoiding an attack starts with knowing what causes it. So identifying your triggers is important.

More ways to take charge

There are different prescription drugs to treat asthma. Some treat attacks by improving airflow. These are the "quick relievers" or "emergency" inhalers.

Others reduce inflamed airways to prevent attacks. These are called "controllers." Your doctor may prescribe one or both.

Always carry your inhaler. Keep a spare at your work, school or gym.

Get emergency help right away if you have an asthma attack and your symptoms continue despite your usual medicine.



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