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## You're Not Alone

Asthma is a chronic illness that currently affects approximately 25 million people alone in the United States. At least half of these individuals suffer from an asthma attack each year. The number of people suffering from asthma also continues to grow.

- There is no known cause for asthma.
- > 3,000 people die from asthma each year.
- The costs of asthma affect the economy.
- Asthma attacks and deaths are preventable!

(NHLBI, 2011)

## Where can I turn to?

If you have questions or think you might have asthma, you can go to your local family doctor or seek out the opinion of a doctor who deals with diseases of the lungs, known as a pulmonologist. You can also check out some information from these credible sources:

- \* The Centers for Disease Control & Prevention
- \* The National Heart, Lung, & Blood Institute
- \* The American Lung Association



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For more information on asthma and asthma control, please visit:

The CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/> or

The American Lung Association at <http://www.lung.org/lung-disease/asthma/>



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# CONTROLLING YOUR ASTHMA

A guide for young adults

# What is Asthma?

Asthma is a common disease of the lungs that affects the way you breathe. It consists of swelling of lung tissue, or inflammation, and also constriction, or tightening of the muscles of the lung.

- Symptoms include coughing, shortness of breath, wheezing, and/or chest tightness.
- An asthma attack is usually worsening of the above symptoms.
- Asthma can affect any age, including children.
- There's not a cure for asthma.

(NHLBI, 2011)

## The 4 Types of Asthma

Asthma is divided into four different categories, and your doctor can let you know which type you are in based on your symptoms and testing.

- Intermittent asthma
- Mild persistent asthma
- Moderate persistent asthma
- Severe persistent asthma

## A look at asthma:

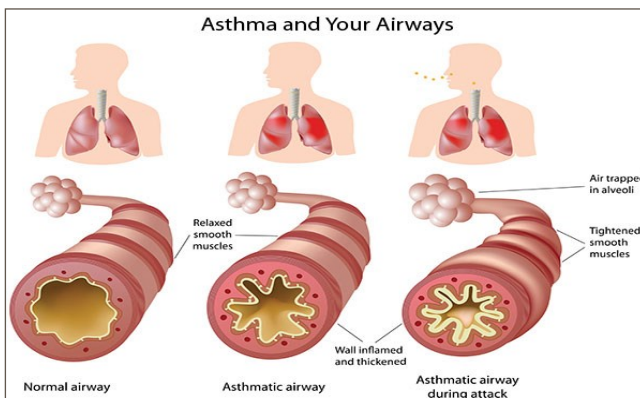


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## Asthma Triggers

Triggers, or external factors, are usually responsible for asthma attacks as they cause tightening of the airways and inflammation, or swelling. Different people respond to different triggers. Part of good asthma control is figuring out and avoiding these triggers. Some triggers include:

- Cigarette smoke
- Exercise
- Weather changes, such as cold air
- Strong odors, such as perfume
- Air pollution
- Infections, such as a cold
- Food allergies
- Certain medications
- Outdoor & indoor allergens
- Strong emotions, such as anxiety

(Cleveland Clinic, 2012)

## Asthma Control

The goal of asthma treatment is good control, which means less asthma attacks. This includes:

- Routine follow-up with your family doctor or pulmonologist.
- Avoiding asthma triggers.
- Taking medications, including inhalers, as prescribed.
- Having an individual asthma action plan, created by you and your doctor.

## Asthma Action Plan

An asthma action plan is key to good asthma control. It will vary from person-to-person but should always include:

- Your medications, including which ones to take, how to take them, and when.
- What to do if your asthma symptoms get worse.
- When to contact your doctor.
- When to go to the emergency room.

(Cleveland Clinic, 2012; NHLBI, 2012)



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