

Asthma

What is asthma?

Asthma is one of the most common chronic diseases among children, but adults can have asthma, too. It is caused by long-term swelling of the lung airways. Asthma causes repeated episodes of wheezing, coughing, chest tightening and/or breathlessness. This is called an asthma attack. **If your child has asthma, he or she has it all the time**, but will only have asthma attacks when something bothers the lungs.

What causes asthma?

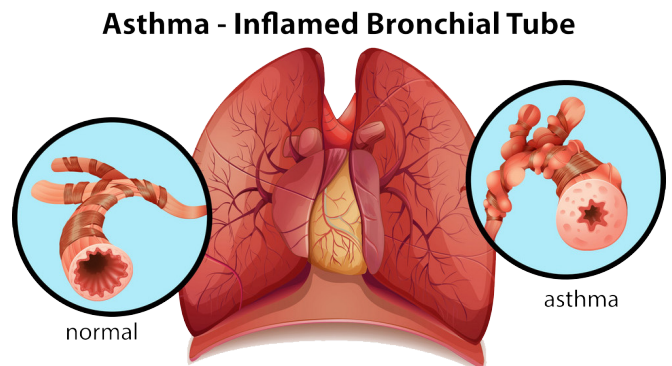
The causes of asthma are usually unknown. Unfortunately, there is no cure for asthma at this time, but there are treatments to help people with asthma.

What are asthma attacks?

Asthma attacks occur when the lung airways become swollen and tighten due to too much inflammation in the airway, causing trouble breathing. Asthma attacks are also caused by “triggers”.

What causes asthma attacks?

Asthma can be triggered by many things including airway infections, allergy particles (like dust, smoke, pet dander, etc.), and chemical irritants. During an asthma attack, persons experience symptoms such as wheezing, coughing, chest tightening, and breathlessness.



Common Asthma Triggers

- Dust
- Smoke
- Pet Dander
- Pollen
- Chemical Irritants
- Weather Changes
- Physical Exercise
- Colds
- Strong Emotions

Call HCHC if you need to use your quick relief medicine more often than usual, if it is not helping to alleviate your symptoms, or if you have any questions or concerns.

What can I do to avoid asthma attacks?

As much as possible, avoid your asthma triggers. If you have questions about identifying and avoid these, talk with your provider.

Even when there are no symptoms of asthma, it is very important to **continue to take your medications as ordered by your provider**. Some medications are inhaled (breathed in), and some can be taken as a pill.

Asthma medications come in two types: quick relief and long-term control. Ask your provider which of your medicines are quick relief or for long term control. Your long-term control medication helps you have fewer and milder attacks, but they don't help if you are actively having an asthma attack. In order for the long-term control medicines to help, you must take them daily, even when you are not having your asthma symptoms. During an asthma attack use your quick relief medicine.

Refer to your Asthma Action Plan for specific instructions on how to use your medications.