

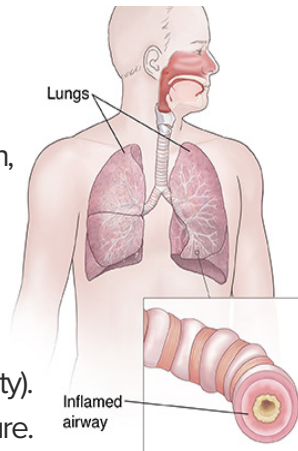


Asthma (Adult)

Asthma is when the airways (or breathing tubes) in your lungs become swollen and irritated. This makes it difficult to breathe.

No one knows what causes asthma. **Asthma can be triggered by:**

- + An allergy (like dust, mould, pollen, or animal dander).
- + An irritant (like smoke, pollution, strong fumes, or perfume).
- + A reaction to a medicine.
- + Heavy exercise.
- + A cold or a chest infection.
- + Emotions (like anger or anxiety).
- + Changes in the air temperature.



Once you have asthma, you will always have asthma. Your family doctor will help you learn how to live with asthma, control it, and limit attacks.

HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF AT HOME

- + Rest.
- + Take medicine(s) as directed.
- + Have someone stay with you or check on you today.
- + Make an appointment to see your family doctor within 24 to 48 hours.
- + Protect yourself from things that can trigger an attack.

TIPS FOR LIVING WITH ASTHMA

- + Any time you see a new health professional, make sure you tell them about your asthma.
- + Wear a medical identification tag (Medical Alert) to let others know about your asthma.

- + Make an **'asthma action plan'** with your doctor. This is a plan for what actions you and others around you need to take if you have a severe attack. Write it down and post copies at home, school, or work.

WHEN TO GET HELP

It is best to get help early. **DO NOT wait until your asthma attack is severe.**

Call 9-1-1 if you are experiencing any of the following:

- + You suddenly find you have:
 - Shortness of breath.
 - Severe wheezing.
 - Severe coughing.
 - Chest tightness.
- + You don't get any relief from your inhaler medicine.
- + You can not speak because you can not get your breath.
- + Your lips or fingers are turning blue.

See your family doctor if you are experiencing any of the following:

- + You are short of breath with activity.
- + You become wheezy when resting.
- + You find it hard to walk or talk because of your breathing.
- + Your breathing does not improve within 15 minutes of using your inhaler medicine.
- + You need to use your inhaler medicine every 2 to 3 hours.
- + You are feeling faint.
- + You are tired from the hard work of breathing.
- + You are not sleeping well because of your breathing.

Asthma (Adult) - Continued

TO LEARN MORE ASK

- + Your family doctor.
- + Your pharmacist.
- + HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to www.HealthLinkBC.ca

RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP

- Follow up with your primary care provider in ____ days.

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Find this information sheet on the BC Emergency Medicine Network website:

www.bcemergencynetwork.ca/clinical_resource/asthma-adult/

bcemn.ca

The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team. This information does not replace the advice given to you by your health care provider.

