

# Asthma

Asthma happens when your airways (tubes in your chest) become narrow and swollen. This makes it difficult to breathe. Things that can trigger your asthma include:

- An infection (e.g., cold or flu)
- An allergen (e.g., dust, pollen, animal fur)
- An irritant (e.g., smoke, pollution, chemicals, perfume)
- Heavy exercise
- Cold or dry air



## What to Expect

People with asthma have symptoms that come and go throughout their life. There can be times when your symptoms are worse than usual, and treatment is needed to prevent these flare-ups.

The main symptoms of asthma are:

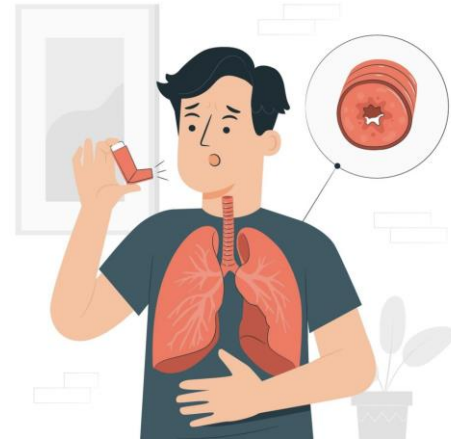
- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing
- Cough
- Chest Tightness



## When to Get Help

**Go to the nearest Emergency Department or Urgent Care Centre if you experience:**

- Severe Symptoms of:
  - + Shortness of breath.
  - + Coughing.
  - + Wheezing.
  - + Chest tightness.
- Shortness of breath or wheeze while resting.
- Symptoms that do not get better after using your puffer.
- Difficulty speaking in full sentences.



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### Recommended Follow-Up

- Follow up in \_\_\_ days.

Name of Provider  
Reason  
Date/Time  
Location  
Contact Info

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**See your family doctor or a walk-in clinic immediately if:**

- You have a slight wheeze while resting.
- You need to use your rescue puffer more frequently or less than 2-3 hours apart.

**See your family doctor or a walk-in clinic within a week if:**

- You have some mild shortness of breath with activity or shortness of breath that keeps you from doing normal daily activities.
- You have more asthma symptoms at night than usual.

**To Learn More:**

- Ask Your health care provider.
- Go to HealthLinkBC - call 8-1-1 (7-1-1 for deaf or hard of hearing) or go online to [www.HealthLinkBC.ca](http://www.HealthLinkBC.ca)



## How to Care for Yourself at Home

- Avoid things that might trigger your asthma symptoms.
  - Avoid being outdoors during wildfire season.
- Wash your hands frequently and wear a mask when you are around someone who is sick.
- Keep an asthma symptom diary.
  - Learn what triggers your asthma.
  - Write down how often you need to use your blue puffer.
- Create an asthma “action plan” with your primary care provider. This involves:
  - Knowing what to do when your symptoms are getting worse.
  - Using puffers more often or going to the emergency department.

## Asthma Discharge Instructions - continued

### **Medication**

Take your medication(s) as directed.

Rescue Puffer: \_\_\_\_\_

+ Number of puffs: \_\_\_\_\_

+ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

- Colour: usually blue
- Use when you have symptoms.

Control Puffer: \_\_\_\_\_

+ Number of puffs: \_\_\_\_\_

+ Frequency: \_\_\_\_\_

+ Use regularly to prevent symptoms.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_



### **Notes:**

### **Additional Information**

- **Understanding asthma:**  
<https://www.healthlinkbc.ca/more/health-features/understanding-asthma>
- **How to use a puffer (video):**  
<https://sunnybrook.ca/glossary/item.asp?g=9&c=0&i=1423&page=26008>

Find this information sheet on the ECBC website:

[https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical\\_resource/patient-information-sheet/asthma-adult/](https://emergencycarebc.ca/clinical_resource/patient-information-sheet/asthma-adult/)

### **Tell Us What You Think!**

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[bit.ly/pdsfeedback](https://bit.ly/pdsfeedback)



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.

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