



Asthma

Environmental Allergies

Sinusitis

Urticaria

Food Allergies

Insect Allergy

Atopic Dermatitis

Contact Dermatitis

Drug Allergy

Immunodeficiency

Occupational Allergy

Anaphylaxis

Bronchitis

Chronic Cough

Allergic Rhinitis

Immunotherapy

## What is Asthma?

Asthma (AZ-ma) is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways. Asthma causes recurring periods of wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. The coughing often occurs at night or early in the morning.

Asthma affects people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood. In the United States, more than 25 million people are known to have asthma. About 7 million of these people are children.

Many people do not know they have asthma, especially if their symptoms aren't severe. But any asthma symptom is serious and can become deadly.

## What are the symptoms of Asthma?

The most common asthma symptoms are:

- Coughing, especially at night, with exercise, or when laughing
- Trouble breathing
- A tight feeling in the chest
- Wheezing – a squeaky or whistling sound

Sometimes a cough that won't go away is the only symptom of asthma. Asthma symptoms often happen at night and in the morning, but they can happen any time. They get worse when you are around your asthma triggers.

Asthma screenings are being scheduled in communities across the country. During a screening, you'll answer questions about your breathing, wheezing, coughing, itchy eyes and runny nose, take a simple breathing test that involves blowing into a tube, and meet with an allergist to discuss your results.

## Is asthma a psychological disorder?

Asthma is not a psychological or emotional disorder, but sometimes a physical display of strong emotion – such as shouting, crying, laughing or rapid breathing – may contribute to an asthma episode. Panic can prevent a person with asthma from relaxing and following instructions properly, which is essential during an attack. Medical scientists have found that behaviors associated with strong emotions can cause bronchial tubes to constrict, which may provoke or worsen an attack.

Sources: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/health-topics/topics/asthma/#>  
<http://www.aaaai.org/allergist/asthma/symptoms/Pages/default.aspx>

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A chronic disease, such as asthma, can cause emotional strain. Depression may set in when those with asthma believe they cannot participate in normal activities. As a leading cause of work and school absences, asthma can have a significant effect on livelihood, education and emotional well-being.

### **Is asthma life-threatening?**

In severe and poorly controlled cases, asthma can be life-threatening, and the death rate and prevalence of asthma has increased significantly since the late 1970s. Deaths occur more frequently in adults. If there is a single factor leading to severe or fatal asthma attacks, it appears to be a delay in administering appropriate drug therapy.

Working in partnership with an allergist, having an action plan, recognizing the triggers and early warning signals of an impending attack, and using a peak flow meter to detect the degree of bronchial obstruction, can all contribute to a decrease in the frequency and severity of attacks.

If you think you may have Asthma, feel free to schedule an appointment with us at: (516)-822-6655

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