



# Asthma FACTS

## What is Asthma?

- It is a **chronic inflammatory disease** that causes the airways of the lungs to swell up, narrow, and/or fill up with mucus.
- It is a chronic ongoing disease that **cannot be cured**, but it **can be managed** so that individuals can live long productive lives.

## What causes asthma?

- Asthma occurs because the lungs respond to a stimulus, or “trigger” causing a negative reaction in those who have asthma.
- Triggers can be: dust, tobacco smoke, polluted air, cockroach droppings, pets, mold, strenuous exercise, bad weather, some foods, and some emotions.

## How is asthma treated?

- Quick-relief medications:
  - Control the symptoms of an asthma attack
  - A common quick-relief medication is Albuterol, which also goes by names like ProAir, Proventil, and Ventolin.
- Preventers, or long-term controller medications:
  - Are medicines taken on a regular (daily) basis
  - Help people with asthma have fewer and milder attacks
  - Do not help in an acute asthma attack

## How can asthma be controlled?

- Avoid triggers
- Keep surroundings as free as possible from asthma triggers (e.g. clear dust away regularly, avoid areas with tobacco smoke, manage air filters, ensure a stress-free environment as much as possible)
- Recognize signs and symptoms of worsening or uncontrolled asthma
- Take medications as prescribed to help manage, prevent, or control asthma (know which medication belongs to which child, name of medication, when to give it, how much, and how to give it)
- Have an action plan to help guide asthma management under differing situations, especially in the event of an asthma attack

## Resources

### American Lung Association

1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 800,  
Washington, DC 20004

T: 202 785 3355 & F: 202 452 1805

<http://www.lung.org/>

Hotline: 1 800 586 4872.

### The National Asthma Education and Prevention Program

NHLBI Health Information Center

P.O. Box 30105

Bethesda, MD 20824-0105

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

### Mild Signs & Symptoms

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath

### Severe Signs & Symptoms

- Troublesome cough
- Pronounced wheezing
- Shortness of breath with rapid breathing
- Accessory muscles used
- Emotional changes: panic, fear, restlessness
- Inability to speak
- Decrease alertness

(301) 592-8573

TTY (240) 629-3255

### Center for Disease Control and Prevention

1600 Clifton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30333, USA

800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

TTY: (888) 232-6348

[E: cdcinfo@cdc.gov](mailto:cdcinfo@cdc.gov)

<http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/>

(800) 822-2762