

THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA

In the Clinic
Annals of Internal Medicine

Asthma causes a squeezing of the muscle in the walls of the tubes (airways, bronchi) that bring air to the lungs. Breathing becomes difficult when this happens.

Web Sites with Good Information about Asthma

MedlinePLUS

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/asthma.html

American Lung Association

www.lungusa.org

How to Use a Metered Dose Inhaler

Inhalers deliver a specific dose of medicine to the lungs in a spray form.

1. Take off the cap and shake the inhaler hard.
2. Breathe out all the way.
3. Hold the inhaler about 2-fingers width from your mouth.
4. Start to breath in slowly through your mouth as you press down on the inhaler once and keep breathing in slowly until you can't breathe in any more.
5. Hold your breath and count to 10 slowly.
6. Repeat steps 1 to 5 if your doctor has prescribed more than 1 puff of medicine, wait about 1 minute between puffs.

HEALTH TIPS* WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here's what you can do to feel better.

Stay away from what makes your asthma worse:

- Dust
- Smoke
- Animals
- Cold or dry air

Don't smoke and stay away from people who do

Asthma-proof your home:

- Get special mattress and pillow covers
- Get rid of old carpets and drapes
- Use air conditioners and dehumidifiers

Use your medicines the right way:

- Take medicines that prevent attacks every day
- Take medicines that stop attacks when you need them
- Learn the right way to use your inhalers

Asthma makes you cough and wheeze and can make it hard to breathe.

Call your doctor or go to the hospital if it is hard to breathe and your medicines are not helping

Things to ask your doctor:

Which medicines are to keep attacks from happening?

Which medicines are to stop attacks when they come on?

Can you show me the right way to use my inhaler?

Can I use my inhalers more often if I need to?

What are the side effects of my inhalers and my other medicines?

Do I need a special meter to check my breathing at home? How do I use it?

How long should I wait to call the doctor or go to the hospital if I am having trouble breathing?

*HEALTH TIPS are developed by the American College of Physicians Foundation and PIER