

Asthma

Morehouse School of Medicine



Prevention Research Center

Asthma is a serious public health concern within the United States. Asthma is very common within children, however adults may experience asthma as well. Asthma is closely related to physical activity. Asthma is a chronic disease, which means once you have asthma, you have it all the time and will experience symptoms when your lungs irritate you. Currently there is no cure for asthma, as well as knowing what causes asthma. Asthma causes 10.5 million children to miss days in school and 14.2 million adults to miss days at work. Focusing on statistics from 2010, 18.7 million adults have asthma and 7 million children had asthma.

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs and causes periods of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and nightly/early morning coughing. Asthma tends to inflame and narrows the airway, which leads towards swelling of the airways and the surrounding muscles. Ultimately, triggering the symptoms. If anyone has a family history of allergies or asthma, they are more prone to developing asthma

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA?

Major signs and symptoms of asthma include

- Coughing either in early morning setting or at night time making it difficult to sleep
- Periods of wheezing
- Chest tightness that may typically feel as if someone is sitting on your chest
- Shortness of breath, which then a person may feel “out of breath” or as if they can’t catch their breath

Asthma can be triggered by:

- Allergens i.e. pollen, mold, animals, dust mists
- Exercise
- Occupational hazards
- Tobacco smoke
- Air pollution
- Airway infection

Although there are distinguished signs and symptoms for asthma, not everyone experiences these and having these symptoms does not always conclude to asthma. The best way to verify asthma is to talk to your physician about a lung test, medical history, and a physical exam. Symptoms from individual to individual may vary over time. As well, severe symptoms of asthma may be fatal.



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WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR ASTHMA?

Asthma affects individuals at all ages, however tend to occur more during periods of childhood. Children who often experience wheezing or respiratory infections are more at risk for developing asthma. Unfortunately, asthma continues beyond 6 years of age and includes other risk factors such as allergies, eczema, or family history of asthma.

Boys tend to more prevalent in developing asthma than girls. Conversely, among adults, more women tend to experience the disease than men. Officials are still not clear as to how gender plays a role in asthma. Most individuals who develop asthma experience allergies.

MANAGEMENT OF ASTHMA

Good asthma control will:

- Prevent chronic and troublesome symptoms, such as coughing and shortness of breath
- Help you maintain good lung function
- Let you maintain your normal activity level and sleep through the night
- Prevent asthma attacks that could result in an emergency room visit or hospital stay

Common asthma triggers can worsen asthma symptoms. Once a person has an understanding of their symptoms, take steps to control many of them.

The CDC has implemented a program called the National Asthma Control Program to assist Americans with asthma to achieve better health and improved quality of life. "The program funds states, school programs, and non-government organizations to help them improve surveillance of asthma, train health professionals, educate individuals with asthma and their families, and explain asthma to the public." ("CDC - Asthma")



Reference:

"Asthma | AAAAI". The American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology. N.p., 2016. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.
"CDC - Asthma". Cdc.gov. N.p., 2016. Web. 10 Apr. 2016.
"How Is Asthma Treated And Controlled? - NHLBI, NIH". Nhlbi.nih.gov. N.p., 2016. Web. 12 Apr. 2016.

Asthma triggers

- ✓ Allergens
(i.e. pollen, mold, animals, dust mists)
- ✓ Exercise
- ✓ Occupational hazards
- ✓ Tobacco smoke
- ✓ Air pollution
- ✓ Airway infection



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