



Exercise-Induced Asthma

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Condition Basics

What is exercise-induced asthma?

Exercise-induced asthma is an asthma attack that happens during or after exercise. It's also called exercise-induced bronchospasm.

What are the symptoms?

Most people with exercise-induced asthma feel short of breath, have chest tightness, and may have a cough. These symptoms may start 10 to 15 minutes after a brief activity or about 15 minutes into a longer activity. Symptoms usually get better within 30 to 60 minutes after you stop the exercise.

If you notice the symptoms of asthma (such as wheezing or shortness of breath) after activity, be sure to tell your doctor. You can make a plan for how to treat your symptoms so you can keep exercising.

Why is it sometimes hard to diagnose exercise-induced asthma?

To find out if you have exercise-induced asthma, your doctor will do a physical exam and ask about your health. They will ask if you have wheezing or shortness of breath during or after physical activity or exercise. And the doctor will ask if these symptoms get better when you are not physically active.

How is it treated?

If you have exercise-induced asthma, talk with your doctor about using medicine before exercise. It may help reduce symptoms. It will especially help in cold, dry weather.

Some doctors recommend that:

- You use a quick-relief medicine about 10 to 30 minutes before you exercise. The effect of this medicine lasts several hours.
- You take your long-term controller medicine every day, if needed. This can help reduce airway inflammation.

Here are some other steps you can take to reduce symptoms when you're active:

- Avoid being exposed to air pollutants and allergens when you can. Exercise indoors when air pollution levels are high.
- Wear a loose-fitting mask or scarf wrapped around your nose and mouth if you exercise in cold weather. This may help warm and moisten the air you breathe in.
- Warm up before strenuous exercise. And slowly increase your activity.

Credits

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