



Asthma in Children

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Condition Basics

What is asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease that makes it hard for your child to breathe. It causes the airways that lead to the lungs to swell and get inflamed.

Some children have breathing problems only at certain times, like during allergy season, or when they get a cold, or when they exercise. Others have breathing problems a lot of the time.

When asthma symptoms suddenly get worse (or flare up), the airways tighten and get narrower. These flare-ups are also called asthma attacks or exacerbations (say "ig-ZAS-ur-BAY-shuns").

Treatment can help your child feel and breathe better and help keep your child's lungs healthy. Many children with asthma play sports and live healthy, active lives.

What causes it?

Experts don't know exactly what causes asthma in children. But we do know that asthma runs in families. And it's much more common in children who have allergies.

What are the symptoms?

When your child has asthma, he or she may wheeze or cough a lot. Your child may also feel tightness in the chest or feel short of breath.

How is it diagnosed?

To find out if your child has asthma, your doctor will do a physical exam and ask about your child's symptoms and health. The doctor may also have your child do breathing tests to find out how well your child's lungs work.

How is asthma treated?

Asthma is treated with medicine to help your child breathe easier. Daily controller medicine is used to prevent asthma attacks. Quick-relief medicine is for times when symptoms need to be treated fast. Treatment also includes helping your child to avoid things that might trigger symptoms and to follow an asthma action plan.

How can you help your child manage asthma?

You can help your child manage asthma by making sure your child takes asthma medicines the right way, follows an action plan, and avoids things that make asthma worse, like pet dander and dust mites. And you can help your child avoid getting sick by making sure your child gets COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

Credits

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