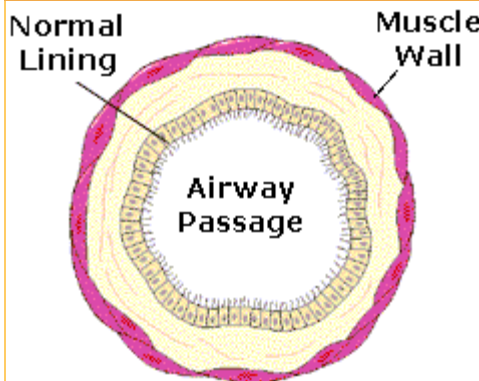


What You Need to Know about Asthma



Normal Bronchial Tube

What is it?

Asthma is a chronic disease in which the airways are inflamed.

What happens in the windpipes?

- The lining of the windpipe becomes more inflamed and produces mucus. This makes the opening smaller.
- The muscles around the windpipes tighten, also making the opening smaller.

What are Triggers?

Triggers are anything that make asthma worse such as:

- Pollutants such as cigarette smoke, smoke from a wood stove or fire or even perfume
- Cold air
- Allergens such as cats, dogs, mites, cockroaches, grass, molds or pollens
- Virus infections like colds, bronchitis or pneumonia
- Coughing, yelling or laughing
- Certain medicines or chemicals

Not everyone has the same trigger and some have more than one. Each person may have a different trigger unique to them. If you have asthma it is extremely important that you [know your trigger](#). This way you can control your asthma by avoiding your triggers.

Tips for eliminating common triggers:

- Do not allow smoking in your house or car
- Remove dust catchers from the bedroom
- Consider using a HEPA air filter in the bedroom
- Consider covering heating vents with an air filter
- Keep humidity in your house between 25% and 50%
- Exercise is one trigger you should not avoid

Asthma Medicines:

Preventer Medicines keep an asthma attack from happening. They should be taken every day or according to your prescription. Common types are:

- Inhaled steroids
- Cromolyn
- Nedocromil

Reliever Medicines are used to treat an attack or to prevent symptoms from exercise. Common types are:

- Oral steroids
- Adrenaline-like medicines such as albuterol, atrovent or alupent
- Theophylline

Peak Flow Meter:

This device helps you treat your asthma at home. A peak flow meter measures the fastest speed at which you can blow air out of your lungs. Air flow slows when the windpipes narrow. As a result the peak flow drops. This happens before you notice any sign of asthma or your doctor can hear any change with a stethoscope. After you learn to use a peak flow meter, you will be able to start treating the early stages of your asthma at home, so that you can avoid emergency care.

ATTENTION: This web page is intended to be used for health information ONLY. If you or a family member has a medical emergency, please call your doctor or 911, or your local emergency service number.

Copyright © Claiborne County Hospital, 1999-2001