

Prevention:

- Avoid animals that cause an allergic reaction
- Avoid house dust mites when cleaning carpets and mattresses
- Avoid wet and moldy places that cause the growth of fungi and parasites
- Avoid exposure to cigarette smoke and air fresheners
- Keep windows closed when it is dusty in the summer
- Take your asthma medicine



Patient and Family Education

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Asthma

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the airways in the lungs. Its symptoms are caused by inflammation, which makes the airways red, swollen, narrower and extra-sensitive to irritants. This leads to recurrent attacks of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing.



What Causes Asthma?

The causes of asthma are not fully understood. It is thought that asthma is caused by a mixture of hereditary factors (those you are born with) and environmental factors. How these factors work together is still largely unknown.

Allergens from house dust mites and pets are the most common causes of asthma symptoms. However, many other allergens, including pollen and mold, can cause asthma symptoms. Still, some patients with asthma have no obvious allergies.



Asthma Symptoms Include:

- Coughing
- A tight feeling in the chest
- Wheezing; whistling noise when breathing
- Shortness of breath
- Struggling to breathe

These symptoms are often worse at night, in the early morning and/or during exercise.



Common Triggers

There are many different triggers for asthma. These can be different for different people.

The most common asthma triggers include:

- Allergy triggers, e.g. house dust mites, pollens, pets and mold
- Cigarette smoke
- Viral infections, e.g. colds and flu
- Weather, e.g. cold air, change in temperature, thunderstorms
- Work-related triggers, e.g. wood dust, chemicals, metal and salt
- Some medicines