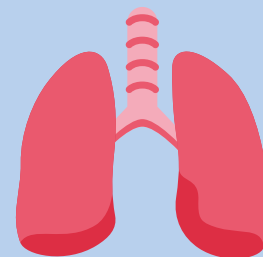


Understanding asthma

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

- Asthma is a common long-term condition that affects the airways (tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs)
- It usually causes symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and breathlessness
- Contact with certain triggers can make symptoms worse and even cause an asthma attack
- There is no cure but simple treatments can control your symptoms so it does not have a big impact on your life



WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

- Wheezing (whistling sound when breathing)
- Breathlessness
- Tight chest
- Coughing

Symptoms can worsen during an "asthma attack" and this is an emergency where you should seek urgent medical attention

TRIGGERS

- There are many triggers of asthma including exposure to cold, infections, dust/allergens and smoking
- If you come into contact with one of your triggers, they can cause your airways to become narrower, more inflamed and swollen
- These reactions make it difficult to breathe and cause asthma symptoms

SIGNS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

- Using blue inhaler more than every 4 hours and not helping
- Struggling to breathe, walk or talk
- Chest is very tight
- Very wheezy and coughing a lot

If you are having these symptoms and your blue inhaler is not helping, CALL 999

HOW IS IT DIAGNOSED?

There is no single diagnostic test for asthma but there are various tests that can help support a diagnosis.

Combination of signs, symptoms and the results of these tests are used to determine the likelihood of asthma.

See your GP if you are experiencing these symptoms and think you may have asthma.

WHAT TREATMENT IS AVAILABLE?

There are many ways to control asthma symptoms to minimise the impact on your quality of life. Treatment is personalised and you should keep an updated action plan following discussion with your GP. This action plan can be completed and downloaded from our website (see "your asthma action plan" document).

Alongside self-care measures (see document), asthma is treated using inhalers (small devices to help breathe in medications).

- Reliever inhalers are used when needed to quickly relieve asthma symptom for a short time
- Preventer inhalers are used every day to prevent asthma symptoms

Sometimes if you experience worsening of symptoms or have an infection, you may need steroid tablets or antibiotics. You should seek advice with the practice about this.

All of the information here has been obtained from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/asthma/> and <https://www.asthma.org.uk/>.

Visit their websites for more information.

