

## What is asthma?



Asthma is when the tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs tighten and become swollen.

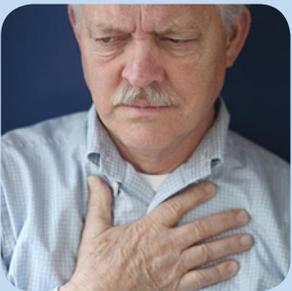
Symptoms of Asthma are:



Coughing.



Wheezing (breathing noises).



A tight feeling in your chest.



Finding it hard to breathe.



If your asthma comes on strongly, it is called an '**asthma attack**'.



It can be very dangerous because it can stop you breathing.



You may need to go to hospital.

Things (triggers) that might make your asthma worse:



Pollen.



Dust.



Some animals like cats and dogs.



Stress.



Mould or damp in your home.



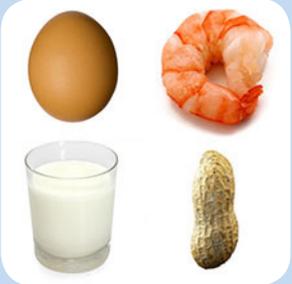
Changes in the weather.



Colds and flu.



Exercise.



Foods like eggs, milk, seafood and peanuts.



Some medicines.

## The 3 ways to treat asthma



**1.** Take your inhalers as instructed by your doctor or nurse.



**2.** Stay away from things that trigger (start) your asthma.

For example, do not eat foods that start your asthma.



**3.** Try to help your breathing after your asthma has started.

This is usually through an **'inhaler'** (pump).



## There are 3 types of inhalers



**The Reliever Inhaler** - used if you have asthma symptoms.

It is usually blue.



**The Preventer Inhaler** - used to stop your breathing tubes from swelling.

It is usually brown.



**The combination Inhaler** - this gives you two medicines at the same time.

It is usually purple or red.



### Spacers

Spacers attach to an inhaler.



Spacers make it easier for you to use inhalers.

They make sure more medicine gets into your airways.



Your doctor or nurse can help you.

# What to do if you have an asthma attack



If your asthma makes you very unwell, see your doctor or nurse as soon as you can.



Usually you take one or more puffs of your reliever (usually blue) inhaler.



If you don't feel better, someone should call an ambulance for you.



You may be given some oxygen and medicine to get your asthma under control.

## Looking after yourself



Take your inhalers as instructed by your doctor or nurse.



Have an asthma check up every year.  
You should see your doctor or nurse 1 time every year.



Have a flu jab every year.

## Useful contacts

The logo for NHS Choices, featuring the word "NHS" in white on a blue background and "choices" in orange.

You can look on-line at **NHS choices:**

[www.nhs.uk/asthma](http://www.nhs.uk/asthma)

The logo for Asthma UK, featuring a stylized green and purple knot icon, the text "asthma UK" in a purple box, and the tagline "with you every breath of the way" in a purple script font.

**Asthma UK.**

0800 121 6244

[www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)

# easyhealth.org.uk

This leaflet was made by the Easyhealth team  
at Generate Opportunities Ltd.



NHS choices

Easyhealth was given permission by NHS Choices to use their health information.



The '**Quality Checking Group**' at Generate checked that the information is easy to understand.

This is a group of advisors with learning disabilities.



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THE BRIGHTER BOROUGH  
Wandsworth

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