**About Asthma**

So you have asthma. That doesn't have to be bad news. If you and your doctor work together, you can control your asthma and lead an active life, you need to find out what triggers it. what medicines can do to treat it and what you can do in your daily life to control it.

Asthma is a disease of the lungs that ranges from mild to serious. But it is treatable and controllable. In an asthma attack, the air passages in your lungs (called airways) areinflamed. They close up temporarily because the muscles around them tighten. This makes it hard to breath. Your clogged airways swell and produce extra amounts of thick, sticky mucus. Breathing becomes even more difficult. You can also have spasms of coughing and/or wheezing. People suffering from severe episodes of asthma fight for every breath and often feel terribly frightened. Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be successfully controlled. Because asthma affects different people in different ways, your treatment is designed just for you.

**What causes asthma?**

Asthma tends to run in families, but no one really knows why only certain people get it. We do know that many different things can cause an asthma attack. These are called "triggers." You can prevent episodes of breathing difficulty if you understand your personal triggers and learn how to avoid them. Not all asthma sufferers react to the same triggers, but here are some of the most common ones:

**Infections:**

When you get a cold, does it seem to go right into your chest? Do you cough for days or weeks? Because colds and other upper respiratory infections can trigger your asthma symptoms, your doctor may increase your asthma medications at the first sign of an infection. Recurring sinus infections also may contribute to asthma.

**Allergies:**

About 80% of children with asthma have allergies. So do 60% of the adults.

# Exercise

Exercise is good for all of us, including those with asthma. But people with asthma tend to have problems with various forms of exercise. Luckily, before you begin exercising, you can take medication to block an asthma attack. Please ask for pamphlet on the subject. It has a more detailed instructions.

# Chemicals and tobacco smoke

An Asthmatic can be sensitive to substances without being actually allergic to them. You should not smoke and should avoid tobacco smoke. Other triggers may include chemicals in household product such as cleaners, solvents, paints and chlorine bleach and even personal grooming products such as spray deodorants, hair sprays, perfumes and cosmetics. Fumes and dust encountered on the job can also lead to asthma attacks. If you find that certain substances trigger your asthma symptoms, take steps to avoid them.

# Medications

Certain medicines can cause some people to have more problems with their asthma. These include beta blockers - used to treat high blood pressure, migraine headaches and glaucoma. Also avoid nonsteroidal anti inflammatory agents such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin and others), and naproxene (Alleave), if they aggravate the Asthma symptoms. These are primarily used for arthritis (and other inflammatory conditions) and pain relief. Use Tylenol in small doses for pains and aches. You should tell your doctors that you have asthma. Also, give each doctor a list of all the prescription and non—prescription medicines you take.

# Weather and Air Pollution

Your asthma may be very sensitive to unusual cold or hot weather, high humidity and weather changes. Air pollution, which can be made worse by weather, is another problem.

# Gastroesophageal Reflux

Gastroesophageal Reflux. Sometimes stomach acid can flow up into your swallowing tube (esophagus) and trigger an attack. If you have problems with indigestion, heartburn or belching, talk with your doctor.

**How is asthma treated?**

Asthma medications can quickly improve asthma attacks. And even better, drugs can actually prevent many episodes of difficult breathing. Medicines for treating asthma come in many different forms, but one of the most common is the inhaler. These devices release a measured amount of a drug through the mouth directly into the lungs. Inhaled medications have several advantages in asthma. Inhalers deliver the drug directly to congested airways. That means the drug can work fast to prevent or halt an asthma attack. Also, inhaled drugs usually have fewer side effects than oral or injected medicines, which travel to all parts of the body.

Inhalers may look complicated, but they can be simple to use. Your health care provider will teach you how to use an inhaler so that the medicine works best. If you have trouble using the inhaler, tell your doctor. There are special devices to help you. Remember that other forms of asthma medicines may be required in addition to the inhaled one, especially for a severe episode. Another way of inhaling asthma medications is with a nebulizer. This device releases the drug in a mist that is breathed in through a mask or a mouthpiece. The nebulizer is especially useful for children too young to use an inhaler and for treating severe attacks of asthma in older children and adults. Several kinds of medicines are used to treat asthma.

Bronchodilators are fast-acting drugs that relax the airways and open them up quickly so that breathing becomes easy. There are two major groups of bronchodilators".

Members of one group are used on as needed basis and the others are used every day.