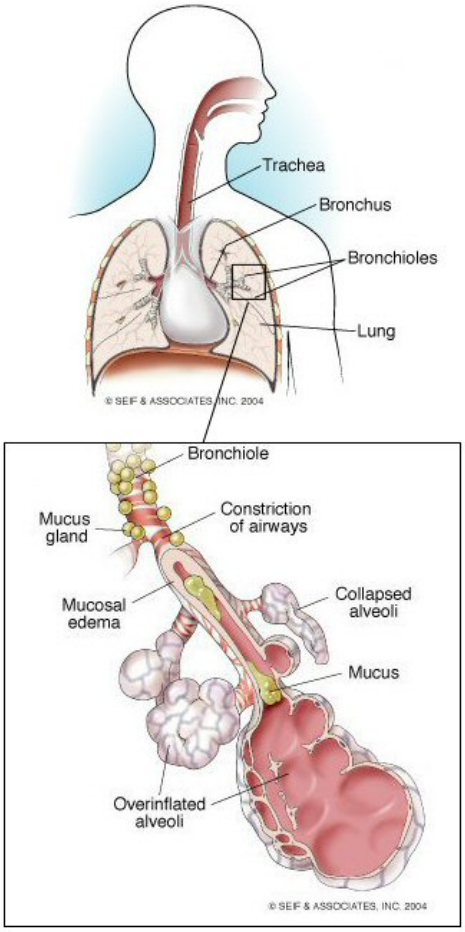
Asthma, Adult

Asthma is caused by narrowing of the air passages in the lungs. It may be triggered by pollen, dust, animal dander, molds, some foods, respiratory infections, exposure to smoke, exercise, emotional stress or other *allergens* (things that cause allergic reactions or allergies). Repeat attacks are common.



HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Use prescription medications as ordered by your caregiver.
- Avoid pollen, dust, animal dander, molds, smoke and other things that cause attacks at home and at work.
  - You may have fewer attacks if you decrease dust in your home. Electrostatic air cleaners may help.
  - It may help to replace your pillows or mattress with materials less likely to cause allergies.
- Talk to your caregiver about an action plan for managing asthma attacks at home, including, the use of a peak flow meter which measures the severity of your asthma attack. An action plan can help minimize or stop the attack, without having to seek medical care.
- If you are not on a fluid restriction, drink 8 to 10 glasses of water each day.
- Always have a plan prepared for seeking medical attention, including, calling your physician, accessing local emergency care and calling 911 (in the U.S.) for a severe attack.
- Discuss possible exercise routines with your caregiver.
- If animal dander is the cause of asthma, you may need to get rid of pets.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have wheezing and shortness of breath even if taking medicine to prevent attacks.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C).
- You have muscle aches, chest pain or thickening of sputum.
- Your sputum changes from clear or white to yellow, green, gray or bloody.
- You have any problems that may be related to the medicine you are taking (such as a rash, itching, swelling or trouble breathing).

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your usual medicines do not stop your wheezing or there is increased coughing and/or shortness of breath.
- You have increased difficulty breathing.
- You have an oral temperature above 102° F (38.9° C), not controlled by medicine.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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