



## 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 healthcare provider.
- Make sure you have your inhalers with you at all times and they are not expired.
- 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 or use pillow and mattress allergen-proof zippered covers.
- Talk to your healthcare provider 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 for a severe attack.
- Discuss possible exercise routines with your healthcare provider.
- If animal dander is the cause of asthma, you may need to limit contact with animals.

### SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have wheezing and shortness of breath even if taking medicine to prevent attacks.
- 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).
- You have a fever.

### SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have increased difficulty breathing, wheezing and shortness of breath.

For more information:

- ✓ <http://www.on.lung.ca/page.aspx?pid=291>

**This general advice cannot cover all possible problems. If there is concern, please contact your physician, healthcare provider or the Emergency Department without delay.**