

Treatment for asthma

Prevention and long-term control are key in stopping asthma attacks before they start. Treatment usually involves learning to recognize your child triggers, taking steps to avoid them and tracking his breathing to make sure his daily asthma medications are keeping symptoms under control. Medications in addition to anti-histamine will include:

- Long-term asthma control medications like inhaled corticosteroids.
- Quick-relief (rescue) medications like short-acting beta agonists and oral steroids.

Managing asthma

Asthma is a chronic disease. It has to be cared for all the time - not just when symptoms are present.

The four parts of managing asthma are:

1. Identify and minimize contact with asthma triggers.
2. Understand and take medications as prescribed.
3. Monitor asthma to recognize signs when it is getting worse.
4. Know what to do when asthma gets worse.
5. Get vaccinated for influenza and pneumonia to minimize asthma fare-ups.

For any questions or clarifications do not hesitate to contact your pediatrician or call the pediatric clinic at 01/372888 ext: 6600.

For any questions or clarifications do not hesitate to call your doctor or call Endoscopy unit

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Asthma in children

Asthma is a chronic, inflammatory disease in which the airways become sensitive to allergens (any substance that triggers an allergic reaction). Allergens will cause the airways to narrow, thus making it difficult for air to go in and out of your child's lungs, causing the symptoms of asthma.

What causes asthma?

The exact cause of asthma is not completely known. It is believed to be partially inherited, but it also involves many other environmental, infectious and chemical factors. The majority of children with asthma have allergies. Some children have exercise-induced asthma, which is caused by varying degrees of exercise. Symptoms can occur during, or shortly after, exercise.

What are the symptoms of asthma?

The changes that occur in asthma are believed to happen in two phases:

1. An immediate response to the trigger leads to swelling and narrowing of the airways. This makes it initially difficult for your child to breathe.
2. A later response, which can happen 4 to 8 hours after the initial exposure to the allergen.

The following are the most common symptoms of asthma. However, each child may experience symptoms differently. Symptoms may include:

- Coughing (either constant or intermittently)/ Nighttime cough.
- Wheezing (this is a whistling sound that may be heard while your child is breathing).
- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath while your child is playing or exercising.
- Chest tightness (your child may say his/her chest hurts or does not feel good).

When to seek emergency treatment

In severe cases, you may see your child's chest and sides pulling inward as he or she struggles to breathe. Your child may have an increased heartbeat, sweating and chest pain.

Seek emergency care if your child:

- Has to stop in mid-sentence to catch his or her breath.
- Is using abdominal muscles to breathe.
- Has widened nostrils when breathing in.
- Is trying so hard to breathe that the abdomen is sucked under the ribs when he or she breathes in.

What can trigger children asthma?

Many things can trigger an asthma episode, including the following:

- Upper respiratory infections.
- Allergies to dust mites, pollens, animal dander, mold/mildew, or cockroaches.
- Exercise.
- Irritants such as cigarette and other forms of smoke, strong odors and perfumes, fumes from wood stoves or kerosene heaters, and air pollution.
- Weather changes, cold air, humidity.

Who is at risk for developing asthma?

Anyone may have asthma, it most commonly occurs in:

- Children with a family history of asthma or allergies.
- Children who have exposure to secondhand tobacco smoke.

Do children outgrow childhood asthma?

How asthma will affect a child throughout his/her lifetime varies, depending on the child. For some children, asthma improves during the teenage years, while others have symptoms that become more severe over time. About half of the children who have asthma at a young age appear to outgrow it, although the asthma symptoms may reappear later in life.