

ASTHMA RESOURCES

What is Asthma?

ASTHMA is a chronic lung disease and is one of the leading causes of school and work absences. People with asthma have very sensitive airways or bronchial tubes. Asthma is rarely cured, but it can be controlled.

WARNING SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS of asthma are not the same for everyone. Symptoms can vary from mild to severe (“asthma attack”). Some of the common warning signs are:

- Chronic cough, especially at night or after exercise
- Difficulty breathing in or out
- Wheezing
- Breathing faster than normal
- Getting out of breath easily
- Itchy, scratchy or sore throat
- Feeling restless or tired
- Unable to talk in full sentences
- Shortness of breath

ASTHMA TRIGGERS cause people to have asthma symptoms. They are different for everyone with asthma. People who have asthma should try to know their triggers and learn how to avoid them.

COMMON TRIGGERS:

- Cigarette smoke
- Cold air
- Hard exercise
- Smoke from a fireplace or wood stove
- Dust
- Some animal hair and feathers (cats, birds, dogs, rodents)
- Perfume or cologne
- Hair spray
- Pollens from grass, trees, and weeds
- Mold

HOW TO MANAGE ASTHMA

- Visit your doctor regularly
- Always have and carry with you a written “asthma plan”
- Understand and follow the directions from your doctor
- Take your medicine as directed
- Learn the signs that you are having an asthma attack
- Avoid triggers that may cause you to have an attack
- Regular exercise (the one trigger you should manage, not avoid)
- Carry your medicine wherever you go
- Stay calm and relaxed
- Call your doctor if the symptoms get worse

American Lung Association of Washington (ALAW)

<http://www.alaw.org>

The American Lung Association® has many programs and strategies for fighting lung disease, including asthma. Website available in Spanish.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

404.639.3311 (24 hour)

<http://www.cdc.gov>

National Center for Health Statistics

301.458.4636

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs>

Washington State Department of Health Asthma Program

360.236.3090

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/asthma/default.htm>