

Asthma: Brief Version

What is asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease. It causes wheezing, coughing, and shortness of breath. You can get asthma at any age, but it is more common in children.

When this coughing and wheezing happens, it is called an asthma attack. An asthma attack may:

- Last a few minutes or several days.
- Be mild or severe.
- Cause death if it is severe and not treated in time.

It is very important to get treatment for asthma so you can live a healthy, active life.

What is the cause?

If you have asthma, the airways in your lungs tighten up. The airways also swell and have more mucus than you need. This means that there is less room for air to move in and out. You may:

- Feel tight in the chest.
- Feel short of breath.
- Cough or wheeze.

If you have asthma, you may have symptoms:

- When you exercise.
- When you breathe in something you are allergic to, like dust, pollen, mold, or animal dander.
- When you breathe in something that irritates your lungs, like cold air, viruses, and tobacco smoke.

How do I know if I have asthma?

Your healthcare provider will:

- Ask about your breathing problems.
- Examine you.
- Give you breathing tests.

How is it treated?

With asthma treatment, you should be able to live a normal, active life. You will probably need to:

- Take medicine.
- Stay away from things that make it hard for you to breathe.

There are 2 main kinds of medicines for asthma.

- **Quick-relief medicines** help open your airways so more air can move in and out. Quick-relief medicines are used to treat asthma attacks. They may be called rescue medicines because they act fast. You should always have a quick-relief medicine with you, in case you start to cough or wheeze.
- **Controller medicines** help keep the airways from swelling. You take these medicines every day to prevent asthma attacks. These drugs do not help stop an asthma attack. They **cannot** be used to stop an asthma attack after you have started wheezing.

Quick-relief medicines are breathed in with an inhaler. Other medicines may be inhaled or taken as a pill.

Be sure you know how to use your inhaler the right way. Ask your healthcare provider to show you how to use the inhaler.

You may need a peak flow meter to check how well you are breathing. Your provider will tell you how to use the flow meter to help you take good care of your asthma.

How can I take care of myself?

It's important to:

- Learn how to tell when you are starting to have an asthma attack. (Your peak flow meter will help.)
- Work with your provider on an asthma action plan. This plan helps you know what to do when you have problems.
- Take your medicines exactly as your healthcare provider tells you.
- See your healthcare provider for checkups as often as recommended.
- Get a flu shot every October.
- Stay away from smoke and other things that cause an asthma attack.
- Talk to your provider about ways you can keep your home free of things that could make it hard to breathe:

Tell your healthcare provider right away if:

- It is hard for you to breathe well even though you are taking your medicines.
- You have effects that you think is from your medicine.
- You are coughing or wheezing more than normal even though you are taking your medicines.

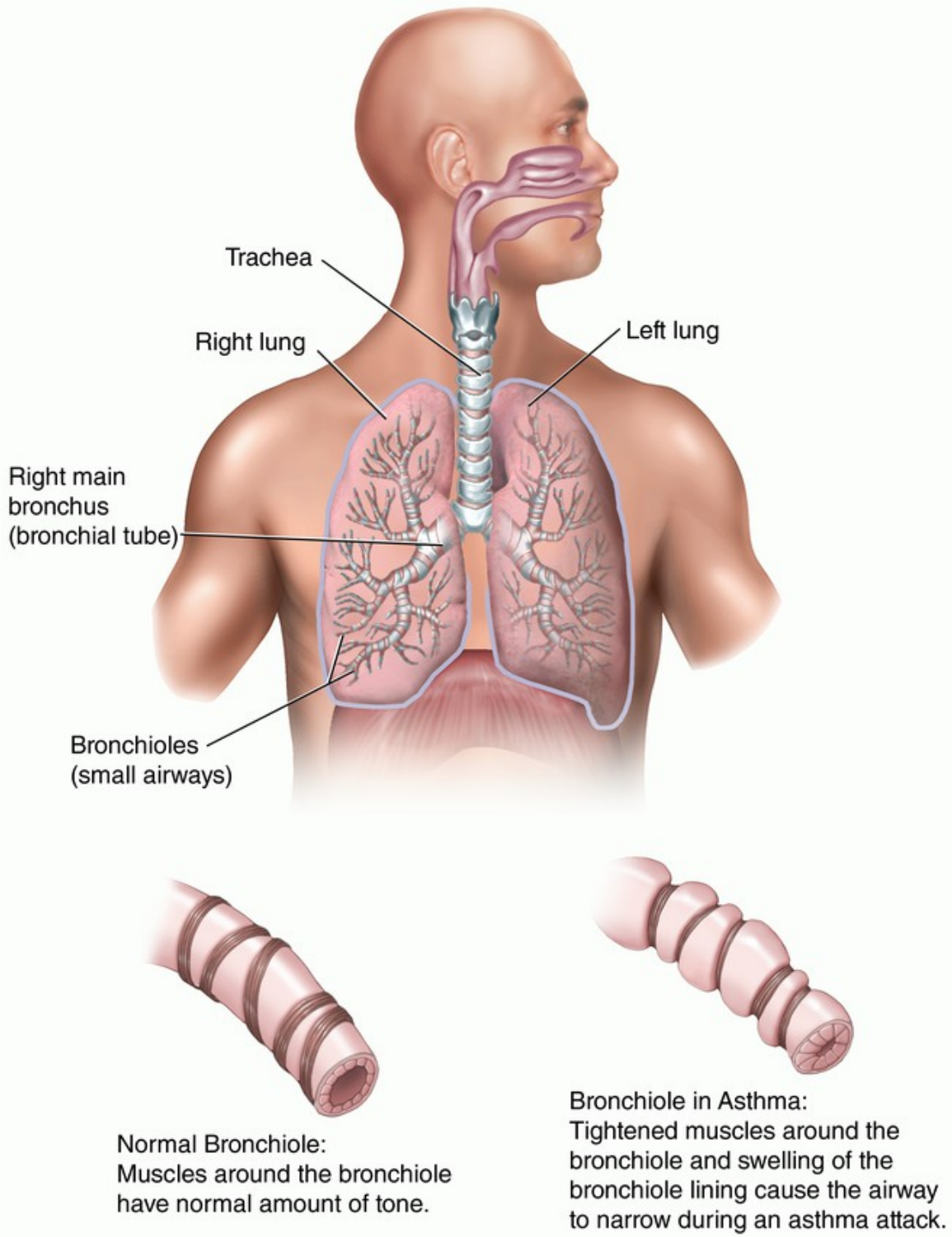
You may need to go to the emergency room or call 911 if:

- You have an asthma attack that does not get better even though you have used your quick-relief inhaler.

Developed by RelayHealth.

This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.

Asthma



Copyright ©2014 McKesson Corporation and/or one of its subsidiaries. All rights reserved.

My Asthma Action Plan

Name: _____ Date: _____




Parent/Guardian: _____

Healthcare Provider: _____

Phone for healthcare provider: _____

Phone for taxi or friend: _____ Emergency #**911** _____

Other instructions: _____

I feel GOOD (Green)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathing is easy. No cough or wheeze. Can work and play 	<input type="checkbox"/> Use asthma long-term control medicine. <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Medicine:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How taken:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How much:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">When:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____ times a day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____ times a day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____ times a day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:	_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day	_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day	_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day				
Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:																			
_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day																			
_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day																			
_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day																			
Peak Flow Numbers: ____ to ____	20 minutes before exercise or sports, take _____ puffs of _____																					
I do NOT feel good (Yellow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cough Wheeze Hard to breathe Wake up at night. Can do some, but not all activities. 	<p>TAKE _____ puffs of quick-relief medicine. If not back in the Green Zone within 20 to 30 minutes, take _____ more puffs.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Medicine:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How taken:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How much:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">When:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>every _____ hours</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>KEEP USING long-term control medicine:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Medicine:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How taken:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How much:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">When:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____ times a day</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____ times a day</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:	_____	_____	_____	every _____ hours	Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:	_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day	_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day
Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:																			
_____	_____	_____	every _____ hours																			
Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:																			
_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day																			
_____	_____	_____	_____ times a day																			
Peak Flow Numbers: ____ to ____	Call healthcare provider if quick-relief medicine does not work OR if these symptoms happen more than twice a week.																					
I feel AWFUL (RED)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicine does not help. Breathing is hard and fast. Can't walk well. Can't talk. Feel very scared 	<p>Get help now! Take these quick-relief medicines until you get emergency care.</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Medicine:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How taken:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">How much:</th> <th style="text-align: left;">When:</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> <td>_____</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____				
Medicine:	How taken:	How much:	When:																			
_____	_____	_____	_____																			
_____	_____	_____	_____																			
_____	_____	_____	_____																			
Peak Flow Number: Under ____	Call 911 if can't walk or talk because it is too hard to breathe OR if lethargic OR if skin is sucked in around neck and ribs during breaths OR if lips or fingernails are gray or blue.																					