



Information for people with asthma

Asthma is a disease of the airways in the lungs. Asthma symptoms include:

- wheezing
- coughing
- chest tightness
- shortness of breath

If you experience these symptoms more than two times per week or need your reliever puffer more than three times per week it might mean that your asthma is poorly controlled. You should see your doctor about improving your asthma management.

Take control of your asthma

Asthma isn't only a problem when your symptoms get worse — by working with your doctor to manage your asthma:

- you can reduce or be free of symptoms
- your health and lifestyle will benefit
- you will be in control of your asthma

Most people can manage their asthma well. The more you learn about your asthma the better you can manage it by:

- following a personal **written asthma action plan** developed with your doctor
- taking asthma medications as advised by your doctor **even when you are well**
- finding out **what triggers your asthma** and avoiding or managing these triggers where possible
- seeing your doctor for **regular check-ups** to monitor and control your asthma

Written Asthma Action Plans

Your doctor will work with you to develop a personalised written asthma action plan. This will help you recognise if your asthma is getting worse and monitor your medication according to your doctor's instructions.

Signs that your asthma may be getting worse include:

- more frequent and more severe symptoms, especially waking at night
- needing to use your reliever medication more often
- your reliever medication may not work as well

Your asthma may be triggered by many things including:

- viral infections — especially colds
- exposure to cigarette smoke
- exercise/activity
- inhaled allergens
- environmental factors
- changes in temperature and weather
- some foods and food preservatives
- some medicines
- chemicals and strong smells
- occupational factors
- emotional factors

Your doctor can help you to recognise and avoid your asthma triggers.

It is important that you can use your asthma medications and devices correctly, and as directed, to ensure that you are getting the most out of your medications. Take your inhaler devices with you when you go to see your doctor/pharmacist or asthma educator so that they can review your technique with you.

Even when you are well, you should see your doctor regularly so that they can review your asthma and change your medication if necessary.

Your local pharmacist, nurse and/or asthma educator can provide additional support and asthma information and can help you to follow your asthma action plan.

For more information

For more information on asthma contact your state or territory Asthma Foundation on the Asthma Foundation Hotline: 1800 645 130 or at www.asthmaaustralia.org.au

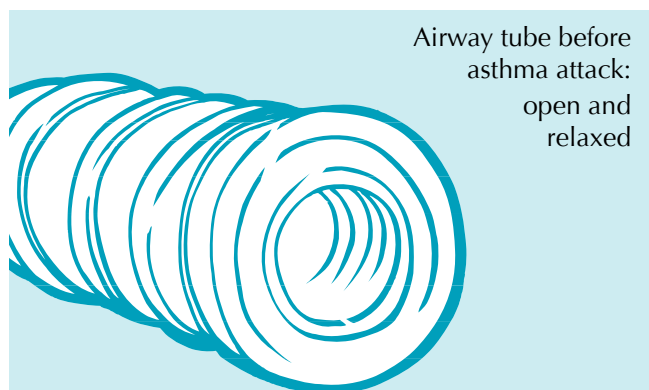
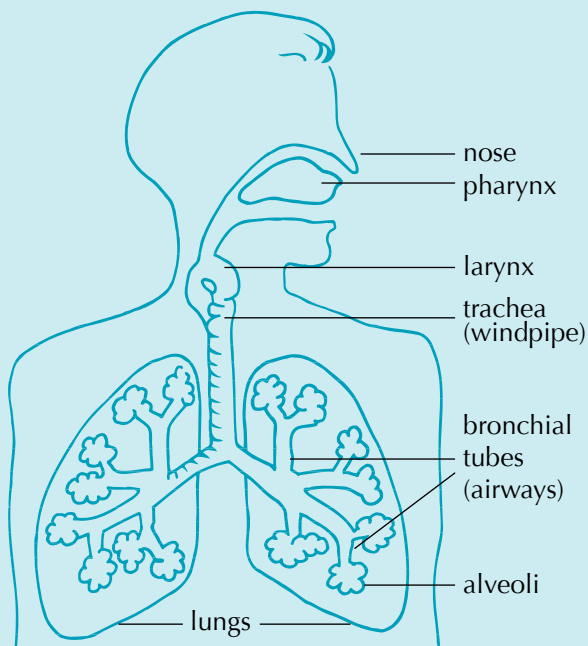
Other useful websites include:

www.nationalasthma.org.au and
www.healthinsite.gov.au

Over the page are some diagrams to help you understand your asthma better.

ASTHMA AND YOUR AIRWAYS

YOUR LUNGS



TAKING ASTHMA MEDICATION

WITH SPACER



- Shake inhaler and insert mouthpiece into spacer*
- Place spacer mouthpiece in your mouth and fire 1 puff as you breathe in slowly and steadily
- Breathe in and out normally for about 4 breaths
- Wait about 1 minute, then repeat for second puff

WITHOUT SPACER



- Shake inhaler*
- Place mouthpiece in your mouth. Fire 1 puff as you inhale slowly and steadily
- Hold that breath for about 10 seconds, then take 4 normal breaths
- Wait about 1 minute, then repeat for second puff

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* Other types of spacers and inhalers are available