



# Understanding asthma

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Asthma is a common chronic condition causing swelling and inflammation of the airways. Asthma may present with one or more respiratory symptoms. Symptoms of asthma include:

- Wheezing
- Breathlessness
- Chest tightness
- Coughing

## Asthma attacks

Asthma attacks vary in intensity. The intensity may be mild, moderate or severe. Read the following topics to learn more about asthma:

- [Assessing your asthma knowledge](#)
- [Asthma and vocal cord problems](#)
- [Asthma and wheezing](#)
- [Asthma attack](#)
- [Asthma: Symptoms of difficulty breathing](#)
- [Asthma: Peak expiratory flow and personal best](#)
- [Challenge tests for asthma](#)
- [Classification of asthma](#)
- [Forced expiratory volume and forced vital capacity](#)

## Asthma in children

Asthma affects children but it should not keep them from living a healthy life. Learn more about how asthma impacts children:

- [Asthma in children](#)
- [Asthma in children: Knowing how bad an attack is](#)
- [Asthma's impact on your child's life](#)
- [How asthma develops in children](#)
- [Treating asthma in babies and younger children](#)

## **Watch a video to understand more about childhood asthma.**

Learning that your child has asthma can leave you with many questions. This video will show you what asthma is, what asthma medications do, and how to recognize and prevent asthma symptoms.

The BC Children's Hospital Asthma Program made this video with support from Child Health BC and the BC Lung Association.

- [Childhood Asthma: A Guide for Families and Caregivers](#)

## **Asthma in teenagers and adults**

As with children, adults may also be affected by asthma. Learn more about how asthma impacts adults:

- [Asthma in teenagers and adults](#)
- [Asthma in older adults: Managing treatment](#)

## **Treating asthma**

Treatment strategies have been developed to get asthma under control. You may be already taking some of these medications. Learn more about how asthma is managed:

- [Asthma treatment goals](#)
- [Asthma: How to overcome treatment obstacles](#)
- [Asthma: Overuse of quick-relief medicines](#)
- [Living with more than one health problem](#)
- [Asthma: Overcoming obstacles to taking medicines](#)
- [Asthma: Ways to take inhaled medicines](#)
- [Nebulizer for Asthma Treatment](#)

## **Asthma medications**

- [Inhaled corticosteroids for asthma](#)
- [Inhaled quick-relief medicines for asthma](#)
- [Omalizumab for asthma](#)
- [Steroid medicine for asthma: Myths and facts](#)

## **Living with asthma**

Practicing prevention can reduce asthma attacks and reduce illness. Prevention can help you avoid emergency department visits and help you live a full life. An asthma diary and an [asthma action plan](#) can help you keep track of how well and how to manage your asthma.

- [Asthma Diary](#) (PDF, 279KB)

## **BC Asthma Action Plans**

Your health care provider can help you identify [asthma triggers](#) so you can make the necessary

## [lifestyle and environmental modifications.](#)

Knowing how to self-manage your asthma symptoms and knowing when to seek medical care may help to improve your quality of life.

- [Asthma Action Plan for Children age 1 -5](#) (PDF, 1.1MB)
  - [Punjabi](#) (PDF, 1.3MB)
  - [Chinese](#) (PDF, 897KB)
- [Asthma Action Plan for Children age 6-18](#) (PDF, 1.1MB)
  - [Punjabi](#) (PDF, 1.4MB)
  - [Chinese](#) (PDF, 1.4MB)
- [Asthma Action Plan for Adults](#) (PDF, 287KB)

## **Lifestyle and environmental modifications**

Some lifestyle and environmental factors can impact your physical health and worsen your asthma. Learn about lifestyle adjustments that can make living with asthma easier.

### **Lifestyle**

- [Asthma and GERD](#)
- [Asthma during pregnancy](#)
- [Asthma: Educating yourself and your child](#)
- [Exercise-Induced asthma](#)
- [Occupational asthma](#)

### **Environmental**

- [Allergy shots for asthma](#)
- [Controlling dust, dust mites and other allergens in your home](#)
- [Controlling pet allergens](#)
- [Indoor air quality \(HealthLinkBC File Number #65a\)](#)
- [Particulate matter and outdoor air pollution \(HealthLinkBC File #65e\)](#)
- [Tips for reducing indoor pollutants in your home](#)
- [Wildfires and your health](#)
- [Asthma: Controlling cockroaches](#)

### **Immunizations**

People with asthma are at higher risk for serious problems from certain vaccine-preventable diseases. It is recommended that people with asthma and their loved ones get vaccines to reduce the risk of these preventable diseases.

For more information about vaccines see:

- [Inactivated influenza \(flu\) vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #12d\)](#)

- [Pertussis \(whooping cough\) \(HealthLinkBC File #15c\)](#)
- [Shingles vaccine \(HealthLinkBC File #111\)](#)
- [Vaccinations](#)

## Useful websites

**The Asthma Society of Canada:** Provides free educational materials and resources with the latest asthma news and information.

- [Asthma Canada](#)

**BC Lung Foundation:** A non-profit and volunteer-based health charity, the BC Lung Foundation offers in-depth information on asthma programs and educational resources.

- [BC Lung Foundation](#)

**The Canadian Lung Association:** The Canadian Lung Association is the leading organization in Canada working to promote lung health and prevent and manage lung disease. For information and resources on asthma, see:

- [Asthma](#)