

Asthma

We were unable to identify an authoritative, non-copyrighted article on asthma. However, an excellent article on asthma prepared by A.D.A.M., Inc. for the U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health is available for free on-line viewing at <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000141.htm>.

To obtain a free copy of this document, go to www.masterdocs.com

Asthma is a disorder of the airways, with periodic attacks of wheezing and shortness of breath. In an asthmatic attack, the bronchi constrict and the linings of the air passages swell.

Asthmatic attacks can be triggered by many factors such as inhaled allergens (e.g., pet dander, dust mites, molds or pollens), respiratory infections, exercise, cold air, tobacco smoke, stress, or allergies to food or drugs.

Asthma is found in about 4% of adults and almost 10% of children. Half develop asthma before age 10, and most before age 30. Asthma can improve over time, especially in children.

Severe attacks with extreme difficulty breathing, a bluish color to the lips and face, severe anxiety, a rapid pulse, or drowsiness/confusion should be treated as medical emergencies.

Treatment can include:

- Avoid known allergens and respiratory irritants
- Control symptoms and airway inflammation through medication.
- Long-term control medications (such as inhaled steroids, leukotriene inhibitors, long-acting bronchodilators, cromolyn sodium, or combined anti-inflammatory/bronchodilator medications)
- Quick relief (rescue) medications (such as short-acting bronchodilators, or oral or intravenous corticosteroids).
- Asthma support groups allow patients to share common experiences and problems.
- Allergy desensitization (helpful in some cases)

A peak flow meter can be used at home to "see an attack coming" even before any symptoms appear so that medication or other actions can be taken to abort the attack.

The following information relates to the article on asthma at the above website:

Updated 2/10/2003 by: A.D.A.M. editorial (2/10/2003). Page last updated: 28 October 2004. Previous review: Thomas A. Owens, M.D., Departments of Internal Medicine and Pediatrics, Duke University Medical Center, Durham, NC. Review provided by VeriMed Healthcare Network (1/6/2002).

A.D.A.M., Inc. is accredited by URAC, also known as the American Accreditation HealthCare Commission (www.urac.org). URAC's accreditation program is the first of its kind, requiring compliance with 53 standards of quality and accountability, verified by independent audit. A.D.A.M. is among the first to achieve this important distinction for online health information and services. Learn more about A.D.A.M.'s editorial process. A.D.A.M. is also a founding member of Hi-Ethics (www.hiethics.com) and subscribes to the principles of the Health on the Net Foundation (www.hon.ch).

The information provided herein should not be used during any medical emergency or for the diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. A licensed physician should be consulted for diagnosis and treatment of any and all medical conditions. Call 911 for all medical emergencies. Links to other sites are provided for information only -- they do not constitute endorsements of those other sites. Copyright 2002 A.D.A.M., Inc. Any duplication or distribution of the information contained herein is strictly prohibited.

This document is provided as a service to the public by TMT (Taylor MicroTechnology, Inc.). TMT does not provide medical advice to you. TMT does inform you of publicly available medical information. However, please realize that the possible diagnoses provided may not include the cause of your own pain, and that a reliable diagnosis can only be obtained by contacting your own health care provider. For details of the Content Disclaimer and Legal Disclaimers regarding materials provided by TMT, see www.masterdocs.com/disclaimer.htm.