



All about asthma

We've put together this presentation with the help of Asthma + Lung UK, who support people with lung conditions like asthma.

We fund scientists to research for a cure for asthma. When people donate money to us, we can use this to look for a cure and better medicines.



How do we breathe?

We breathe using our airways and lungs. Our airways start at our nose, we breathe in through our noses which carries air down our airways and into our lungs.

What is asthma?

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Asthma is a condition that affects your airways – the small tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs.

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Asthma is a very common long-term lung condition affecting the airways that carry air in and out of your lungs.

A healthy airway is open and the muscles are relaxed.

People with asthma often have sensitive and inflamed airways.

What happens in an inflamed airway?

The airways become narrower and the inside of the airway lining becomes swollen and inflamed.

The space for the air to travel through becomes much smaller and narrower - imagine a hosepipe narrowing down to the size of a straw.

This change in the airways makes it very difficult for someone to breathe.

If we could see our airways when they're like this, it might look a bit like eczema – all sore and irritated.

People with asthma say it feels like breathing through a straw. If you have a straw at home, try breathing in and out just through the straw and see how it might feel. Remember to have a supervising adult with you when you try this and stop if you feel dizzy or unwell at all.

What does asthma feel like?

When people experience asthma, they can get symptoms like:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Feeling breathless
- A tight chest

Asthma symptoms can come and go. Sometimes people may not have symptoms for weeks or months at a time.

Did you know?

In the UK, 5.4 million people have asthma. That's one in every 12 adults and one in every 11 children.

What can make asthma symptoms worse?

There are lots of things that can make asthma worse.

Not everyone's asthma will be affected by the same things.

Things that set off your asthma symptoms are called **triggers**.

Triggers can make your airways more inflamed and can cause **asthma attacks**.

What are some asthma triggers?

Having a cold

Air pollution

Weather and pollen

Animals and pets

Dust and smoke

Stress and anxiety

What happens when you come into contact with a trigger?

A few things happen when you come into contact with a trigger:

- Muscles around the airways tighten
- The lining of the airways become swollen and inflamed
- Sticky mucus can build up in the airways

This is what causes asthma symptoms – like coughing, wheezing or breathlessness.

How is asthma treated?

The most common asthma treatments are inhalers.

These are considered the best asthma treatments for most people. This is because inhalers help get the medicine to the airways where it's needed.

Almost everyone with asthma has a preventer inhaler and a reliever inhaler.

Preventer inhalers prevent inflammation in the airways. This means you're less likely to get symptoms if you come across your asthma triggers. Preventer inhalers need to be taken every day to work properly, even if you feel well.

Reliever inhalers help stop asthma symptoms like coughing and wheezing. You use your reliever inhaler when you have symptoms or an asthma attack.

What is an asthma attack?

An asthma attack happens when your symptoms get much worse. This can happen quite suddenly or can build up gradually over a few days.

What should I do in an asthma attack?

All asthma attacks are an emergency.

Don't delay getting help if you have an asthma attack. Call 999 if your reliever inhaler isn't helping or you're worried at any time.

If you're at school and someone is having an asthma attack or someone feels like they might have an asthma attack, speak to an adult immediately to ask for help.

You can stop an asthma attack before it happens, or make it less serious, by recognising when your symptoms are getting worse. The best way to cut the risk of asthma attacks is to take your asthma medicines as prescribed, even if you feel well.

What causes asthma?

It's difficult to say for sure why people get asthma.

But here we look at some of the common risk factors that make having asthma more likely.

Asthma can run in families.

You're more likely to develop asthma if it's in your close family, such as your parents or brothers and sisters. This is partly down to genetics and partly down to the shared environment you live and grow up in.

Babies born early or small

If they were born prematurely, especially if they needed a ventilator to help them breathe after birth.

Allergies

Children with some allergies, like pollen, are more likely to develop asthma.

Air pollution

Air pollution like traffic fumes can make asthma worse. Children living near very busy roads are more likely to develop asthma.

**Does asthma sometimes go away
on its own?**

Does asthma sometimes go away on its own?

Asthma is a lifelong condition. Most people can be symptom-free with good asthma treatment.

Your asthma might improve or disappear completely as you get older. Symptoms might come back later in life, if they are set off by something.

Is there a cure for asthma?

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There's no cure for asthma, but there are tried and tested asthma medicines to prevent symptoms.

This means that most people with asthma can get on with their lives without asthma symptoms getting in the way.

Where do I find more information?

Asthma + Lung UK have lots of advice and information, if you are worried about asthma or would like to find out more.

The website is here: www.asthmaandlung.org.uk

You can call the nurses on our helpline team on 0300 222 5800 too.

If you have questions about asthma, you can always speak to your teachers as well.

The logo for Asthma+ Lung UK features a stylized cross shape composed of four overlapping rectangular blocks. The top and bottom blocks are a vibrant magenta, while the left and right blocks are a rich, textured purple. The text 'ASTHMA+' is positioned on the top block, and 'LUNG UK' is on the right block, both in a clean, white, sans-serif font.

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**ANY
QUESTIONS?**



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THANK YOU