

TOP 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA

1. Asthma is a chronic disease. It doesn't go away, it can't be cured, and people don't "grow out of it." It can, however, be **controlled**.
2. Everyone has different asthma triggers. Common triggers are:
 - Smoke from cigarettes, etc.
 - Dust / dust mites
 - Roaches & mice
 - Strong smells like: perfumes, paint, air fresheners, cleaners, pesticides
 - Animals -cats, dogs, guinea pigs, birds
 - Exercise
 - Cold air / hot air
 - Seasonal changes in temperature
 - Pollen
 - Air pollution
 - Having a cold or flu
 - Mold
 - Strong emotions
3. Everyone has individual asthma signs and symptoms. Common warning signs are:
 - Being short of breath
 - Wheezing
 - Feeling sweaty / getting sudden chills
 - Chest tightness
 - Fast or shallow breathing
 - Hunching over
 - Coughing - especially at night
 - Funny feeling in chest or throat
 - Itchy chin or neck
 - Trouble speaking
4. There are 2 types of asthma medicines:
 - **Controller medicines- prevent** asthma attacks from starting by reducing airway swelling and mucus production. These medications are **taken daily, even when feeling fine**.
 - **Relief or rescue medicines (also called bronchodilators)** - relax the muscles around the airways to **stop asthma attacks once they have started** and provide quick relief from symptoms. Take them as soon as symptoms start. They also can prevent attacks if your child has asthma triggered by exercise. Take them as directed (usually 15-20 minutes before starting exercise).
5. Keep relief medication close by at all times.
6. Staying calm and breathing slowly and deeply (also called "belly breathing") can help during early warning signs of an asthma episode.
7. **Use a spacer** with inhaled asthma medications from Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs).
8. Everyone should have an Asthma Action Plan from a doctor. The Asthma Action Plan details which medications to take when.
9. People with asthma should see their doctor regularly (every 3-4 months) - and **always within a few days** if they have been to the emergency room or have been hospitalized due to asthma
10. Other medicines, even those that don't need prescriptions, can interfere with asthma meds. Check with the doctor before taking anything new.

Brought to you by: Baltimore City Health Department *** Community Asthma Program 410-396-3848***