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Asthma Overview

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways. The causes of asthma symptoms can vary for different people. One thing is consistent with asthma, when airways come into contact with a trigger, the airways become inflamed, narrow, and fills with mucus. When you have an asthma attack, spasms of the muscles around the airways, inflammation and swelling of the mucosal membrane lining the airways, and excessive amounts of mucus contribute to airway narrowing. This makes airway resistance increase and the work of breathing more difficult, causing shortness of breath, cough, and wheezing.

Exercised Induced asthma – in about 80% of asthmatics

Heartburn - approx. 80% of asthmatics also suffer GERD

Sinusitis & Allergies – Most asthmatics have these conditions as well.

An asthma attack can begin immediately after exposure to a trigger or several days or even weeks later.

Early Warning Signs

Frequent cough, especially at night

Losing your breath easily or shortness of breath

Feeling very tired or weak when exercising

Wheezing or coughing after exercise

Feeling tired, easily upset, grouchy, or moody

Decreases or changes in lung function as measured on a peak flow meter

Signs of a cold, or allergies

Trouble sleeping

Unusual Asthma Symptoms

Rapid breathing, sighing, fatigue, inability to exercise properly, difficulty sleeping or nighttime asthma, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, chronic cough without wheezing

Coughing due to asthma usually does not respond to cough suppressants, antibiotics or cough drops but only to asthma medications. You physician should evaluate any cough that does not go away on its own within 3-6 weeks.

Symptoms of nighttime asthma are very common (90%). These symptoms are common between midnight and 8 am & are common causes of insomnia and sleep deprivation. Sleep disturbances due to asthma indicate inadequate control of the asthma.