



*"We don't always get to choose what we love, Health or diseases." - Unknown*

**National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month is observed in May every year**

## Allergic Asthma

Allergic asthma is the most common type of asthma. About 90% of children with childhood asthma have allergies, compared with about 50% of adults with asthma. Inhaling specific substances called allergens (allergy triggers such as pollen, mites, or molds) brings on the asthma symptoms associated with allergic asthma. Because allergens are everywhere, it is important that people with allergic asthma understand their allergy and asthma triggers and learn the facts about preventing asthma symptoms.

### What Is an Allergy?

When your body encounters an allergen, it stimulates IgE antibodies. These antibodies trigger an allergic reaction. They cause the release of chemicals like histamine, which result in swelling and inflammation. This creates familiar allergy symptoms like a runny nose, itchy eyes, and sneezing because your body is trying to remove the allergens.

### What Is Allergic Asthma?

If you have allergic asthma, your airways are hypersensitive to certain allergens. Whether you have allergic asthma or non-allergic asthma, the symptoms of asthma are generally the same and may include any or all of the following:

-  Coughing.
-  Wheezing.
-  Shortness of breath.
-  Rapid breathing.
-  Tightness in the chest.

### Asthma and Allergies:

Asthma and allergies often go hand-in-hand. Asthma is a disease of the branches of the windpipe (bronchial tubes), which carry air in and out of the lungs. There are several different types of asthma. Allergic asthma is a type of asthma that is triggered by an allergy (for example, pollen or mold spores). According to the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology, half of the 20 million Americans with asthma have allergic asthma.

### Common Allergens for Allergic Asthma:

-  Windblown pollen from trees, grasses, and weeds.
-  Mold spores and mold fragments.
-  Animal dander (from hair, skin, or feathers) and saliva.
-  Dust mite feces and Cockroach feces.

Irritants may still trigger an asthma attack, even though they don't cause an allergic reaction. These irritants include:

-  Tobacco smoke.
-  Smoke from a fireplace, candles, incense, or fireworks.
-  Air pollution.
-  Cold air, especially when doing vigorous exercise in cold air.
-  Strong chemical odors or fumes.
-  Perfumes, air fresheners, or other scented products.
-  Dusty workplaces.

Your health care provider can perform allergy and asthma tests to determine exactly which indoor and outdoor allergens cause your allergic asthma. The two most common (and recommended) tests are:

- Skin prick test (also known as intradermal allergy test): Pricking your skin with a tiny amount of the allergen and measuring the size of the red bumps 20 minutes later.
- A blood test known as a specific IgE or sIgE test.

### What Causes Asthma?

-  **Infections:** colds, flu, sinus infections.
-  **Exercise:** very common in children.
-  **Weather:** cold air, changes in temperature.
-  Tobacco smoke and air pollution.
-  **Allergens:** substances that cause allergic reactions in the lungs, including dust mites, pollens, pets, mold spores, foods, and cockroaches.
-  Dust or items producing dust.
-  Strong odors from chemical products.
-  **Strong Emotions:** anxiety, and crying, yelling, or laughing hard.
-  **Medicines:** aspirin, ibuprofen, and beta blocker drugs used to treat conditions including high blood pressure, migraines, or glaucoma.

### What Are the Most Common Symptoms of Asthma?

-  Frequent cough, especially at night.
-  Shortness of breath.
-  Wheezing.
-  Chest tightness, pain, or pressure.
-  If you suffer from allergies and asthma, a reaction to any offending allergy-causing substance can worsen asthma symptoms.

### What Are the Early Warning Signs of an Asthma Attack?

-  Frequent cough, especially at night.
-  Losing your breath easily or shortness of breath.
-  Feeling very tired or weak when exercising, in addition to wheezing, coughing, or shortness of breath.
-  Decreases or changes in peak expiratory flow (measurement of how fast air comes out of the lungs when you exhale forcefully).
-  Signs of a cold or other upper respiratory infections, or allergies.
-  Difficulty sleeping.

If you have any of these asthma symptoms, seek treatment as soon as possible to prevent experiencing a severe asthma attack.

## Who Gets Asthma?

Anyone can get asthma, although it tends to run in families. The disease is becoming more widespread.

## What Should I Do to Help Control My Asthma?

To control asthma, it is important to keep track of how well lungs are functioning. Asthma symptoms are monitored using a peak flow meter -- a device that measures the speed of air that coming out of the lungs when you exhale forcefully. This measurement is called peak expiratory flow (PEF) and is calculated in liters per minute.

## Can Asthma Be Cured?

There is no cure for asthma, but it can be treated and controlled. In most cases, people with asthma can live free of symptoms by following their treatment plan.

## Reference Links:

-  <http://www.webmd.com/allergies/guide/asthma-allergies>
-  <http://www.webmd.com/asthma/guide/allergic-asthma>
-  <https://www.aafa.org/display.cfm?id=8&sub=16>
-  [www.mayoclinic.org/diseases.../asthma/in.../allergies...asthma/art-200474.](http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases.../asthma/in.../allergies...asthma/art-200474)

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