

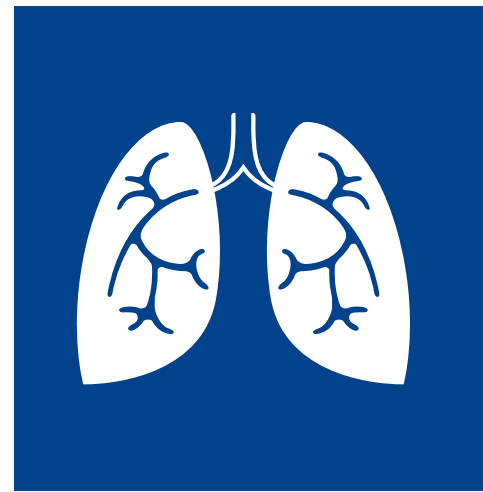
Breathing Easier

Living with asthma

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 22 million Americans are currently living with asthma, and 12 million of them have had an asthma attack over the past year. Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs and causes repeated episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing. For some people, asthma is a minor nuisance. For others, it can be a major problem that interferes with daily activities and may lead to a life-threatening asthma attack.

If you have asthma, you have it all the time, but you'll only have asthma attacks when something bothers your lungs. Asthma can't be cured, but it can be controlled by avoiding these common triggers:

- Allergens
- Irritants in the air
- Sleep apnea
- Food allergies
- Mold
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Respiratory infections
- Stress
- Cold weather
- Strenuous exercise



Make an Action Plan with Your Doctor

Asthma often changes over time, so it's important that you work with your doctor to track your signs and symptoms and adjust treatment as needed. You can control your asthma by knowing the warning signs of an attack, staying away from things that trigger an attack, and following the advice of your health-care provider.

The important thing to remember is that you can control your asthma. With your healthcare provider's help, make your own asthma management plan so that you know what to do based on your own symptoms. Decide who should have a copy of your plan and where he or she should keep it. Take your long-term control medicine even when you don't have symptoms.