Asthma

Asthma & Pediatric Asthma

- Do you have trouble breathing or coughing?
- Difficulty making it through a work-out or playing sports?
- Chest tightness
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath?
- Trouble breathing in the cold or seasonally?

Whether your symptoms are intermittent or persistent, asthma may be the cause of your symptoms. With the latest in-house diagnosis tools and customized treatment plans, the specialists at The Asthma Center can help you breathe easier and feel better!

Common Asthma Symptoms

Asthma is a common problem affecting millions of American adults and children.

If you are one of these people, you may often complain of chest symptoms, including coughing, chest tightness, wheezing and/or shortness of breath. Symptoms may vary from mild to severe. You may suffer only occasional symptoms or perhaps feel some form of discomfort on a daily basis. You may find that your symptoms are only associated with “colds” or follow exposure to irritants such as cigarette smoke, strong odors, and/or chemicals. At times, asthmatic symptoms can be triggered by some sort of stress. In contrast, you may be able to identify a specific allergic factor such as animal dander or pollen, causing your symptoms. In summary, there are many causes of asthma, and the severity of asthmatic symptoms may
Medical Mechanics of Asthma

Although symptoms can vary greatly, all individuals with asthma appear to have a common underlying mechanism that is responsible for their illness.

Asthmatic symptoms result from constriction of the breathing tubes or bronchi (tightening of the muscles around the airways), which is referred to as bronchospasm. Inflammation causes an increase in bronchial mucus production as well as edema (swelling) of the membranes lining the inside of the bronchi. Both of these events contribute to narrowing of the passageways, which results in part from the release of inflammatory chemicals which attract other cell types (eosinophils, neutrophils, etc.) into the airway to perpetuate inflammation. The release of mast cell derived chemicals and resultant inflammation may be triggered by exposure to allergens, irritants and infection.

Inflammation of the bronchi increases airway hyper-reactivity (hyper-responsiveness) and is the main cause of chronic asthmatic symptoms. In summary, the inflammatory reaction of the asthmatic bronchi leads to local airway irritation, bronchospasm, mucus production, swelling and airway hyper-responsiveness. These effects cause a narrowing or obstruction of the airway which in turn results in symptoms of asthma.

Well that’s the bad news. The good news is that asthma is a very manageable medical problem! Those of you receiving optimum management will suffer only occasional symptoms while minimizing the risk of significant long term damage to your lungs. Such an asthma treatment program is based on a detailed and detective-like evaluation in which all possible causes of asthma are examined including common allergic triggers.

Successful treatment involves defining the type and severity
of asthma, learning to avoid triggering factors (environmental controls), using reliever and controller medications and, in some instances, not only allergy injection treatment but also injections with biologic therapy like Xolair or Nucala. Due to the episodic nature of asthma, you must have immediate access to your physician and have a clear treatment plan prepared in advance. In this way, an emerging attack of asthma can be contained and a catastrophe avoided.

Controlling & Treating Asthma

Some children can truly “outgrow” their asthma. However, for most affected adults and many children, asthma is a lifelong disease that can be well controlled.

Unfortunately, if you do not receive optimum medical attention, you will continue to have significant problems that just seem to get worse with the passage of time. One of the main reasons for treatment failure is the fact that treatment is often only given to relieve current symptoms and not consistently directed at managing the underlying chronic nature of this disease.

Underlying problems may include environmental allergy, pollution exposure (e.g. exposure to cigarette smoke), related medical problems (gastroesophageal reflux disease, chronic sinusitis, etc.), stress, insufficient medical management of chronic inflammation of the airways, inconsistent physician followup and/or poor patient compliance with physician recommendations.

Asthma is a complex disease which requires a thoughtful and carefully tailored individual treatment program. The Asthma Center physicians’ goal is to manage your asthma so that you may breathe comfortably and minimize any interference with
work, school, or other activities. In fact, you can lead a relatively normal life if you have a comprehensive treatment program. When your asthma is not well controlled, The Asthma Center specialists feel it is essential to re-examine all the possible factors that may worsen symptoms (“things change”) and then reformulate your treatment plan in an attempt to maximize your comfort and ability to function normally.

The Asthma Center specialists “optimize” (best match between medications, disease process and potential side effects) treatment so that the minimum amount of medication is used to provide good control of asthmatic symptoms and prevent long term consequences. Just as a suit needs to be skillfully tailored if it is to fit properly, so does a medical treatment program need to be adapted expertly to you.