

ASTHMA

How to **Open** Your **Closed Airways**

*You can't cure
asthma. But you
CAN control it.
Here's what you
need to know.*

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma makes your airways smaller. This makes it hard for you to breathe. It can make you cough and wheeze.

WHO GETS ASTHMA?

About one in ten people has asthma. It is common in children. You may get asthma if your parents have it. You may also get it if you have allergies.

TREATING ASTHMA

Work with your doctor to treat your asthma. These are things you need to know:

Take your medicines

Take controller medications each day to prevent problems. Take your reliever medication as soon as you start to cough or wheeze. You may get an inhaler. Inhalers release medicine in a mist that you breathe in. You may need to use a spacer. A spacer is a tube that connects to your inhaler. Take in air and medicine through the other side of the spacer. Press down on the inhaler and breathe in slowly for three to five seconds. Hold your breath for ten seconds. Wait one minute before taking more doses.

Keep track of how you feel

Write down how you feel each day. Your doctor may give you a peak flow meter. This tool shows how well your lungs are working. Use this tool to keep track of your lung health.

Know what makes your asthma worse

Trees, grass, flowers or animal fur may make your asthma worse. Also, smoke or dirty air can make asthma worse. You might feel worse if you exercise or have a cold. Even some foods can bother your asthma. Stay away from these things. Know what to do if your asthma gets worse.

WHAT ELSE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Other things can start your asthma or make it worse:

- ▶ You are overweight
- ▶ You stop breathing for short times while you sleep
- ▶ Your stomach acid comes up
- ▶ You get colds
- ▶ You have a lot of stress or are depressed

See a doctor to check your asthma. Tell them if you take other medicines or if some things bother your asthma.

You will breathe easier if you know how to control your asthma.