

## **ASTHMA –CAUSES AND CURES**

Asthma is a common condition, usually long term, that can cause a cough, wheezing and breathlessness. It affects a person airways (breathing tubes), making it difficult to breath. When someone has asthma, it means that the airways are extra sensitive, and when there are certain things around you to which you are extra sensitive, the airways react, the become red and swollen, this is called inflammation.

Mucus formation increases, which together with the swelling makes the airway narrow. As airway gets narrow, it becomes harder for the air to pass through. The swelling also causes the muscles around the airway to tighten, these tightened muscles cause more narrowing of airways and leave lesser space for the air to pass through.

Many different things can trigger or induce the symptoms of asthma; dust pollen or a viral infection like the common cold can cause the airways to become red and swollen. These causes are called inducers. Cold air and smoke can cause muscle spasm around airways. Exercise also can cause the muscles around airways to go into spasm and squeeze together, causing further narrowing of airways. It is important to know what the triggers and inducers are, so they can be avoided.

Symptoms of asthma are cause by airways narrowing, common symptoms are wheezing ( a hissing or whistle like sound, while breathing ), chest tightness, breathing problem and coughing. Asthmatics experience symptoms frequently early in the morning or during night. Asthma is not completely curable, but it can be completely controlled, and a person with asthma can live a normal and active life. An asthma attack can come up suddenly and can be mild, moderate or severe in its intensity.

If you suffer from asthma, you should see your doctor. He will help you identify the inducers and triggers of your asthma and advise you how best you can avoid them. The more compliant you are, and the more strictly you follow your doctor's advice, the better you will be able to manage your asthma.

Asthma diagnosis is based on medical history, physical examination by the doctor and result of breathing tests. Family history of asthma and allergies helps the doctor to make a diagnosis. Your own personal history of allergies is very important to understand the triggers and inducers of asthma.

Symptoms like wheeze, cough, chest tightness, breathing difficulty and worsening of symptoms at night, due to cold an or exercise or exposure to allergens can help diagnose asthma

On physical examination, the doctor looks for runny nose or swollen nasal passages. Skin will be examined for itching or signs of eczema. Using a stethoscope, a high pitched whistling sound can be heard during expiration / exhalation.

Pulmonary function test ( PFT ) used to measure how much air you breathe in and breath out. The measurements are compared to a normal person.

### **Treatment of Asthma:**

Medication for asthma are categorized into quick relief and long term control.

Reducing airways inflammation and preventing asthma symptoms are long term goals, where as providing immediate relief is the goal of quick relief medicines.

Medicine are given as pills, powder or mist, taken orally using inhaler which ensures that the medicine travels efficiently through the airways without any wastage or spillage.

An allergist or immunologist is the best qualified physician for diagnosing and treating asthma. With the help of an allergist you can take control of your asthma and lead a normal life