

Asthma

Know the symptoms

Asthma is a common long-term condition that can be well controlled in most children. The severity of asthma symptoms varies between children, from very mild to more severe. Asthma has multiple causes and it is not uncommon for two or more different causes to be present in one child. Asthma is more than wheezing. Coughing, recurrent bronchitis and shortness of breath, especially when exercising, are also ways that asthma appears.

The two most common triggers of asthma in children are colds and allergies. After infancy allergies become particularly important and avoiding the allergens to which your child is allergic may help improve their asthma.

A sudden, severe onset of symptoms is known as an asthma attack, it can be life threatening and may require immediate hospital treatment. If your child has asthma, make sure you know how to use your child's inhaler properly and attend the yearly review with your GP.

Asthma often runs in families and parents should avoid smoking indoors or near to their children.

GP says

Your GP will normally be able to diagnose asthma by asking about your child's symptoms, examining their chest and listening to their breathing.

Parents should regularly attend their local asthma clinic and get regular support on better management of their child's asthma at home. This will save unnecessary trips to hospital. All children over six months with asthma who require continuous or repeated use of a steroid preventer inhaler or oral steroid are offered the seasonal flu vaccine. In addition, any child over six months who has been admitted to hospital with a lower respiratory tract infection should also be offered the seasonal flu vaccine.

Asthma nurse says

The most important part of managing asthma is for you and your child to know about asthma and what triggers an attack.

Our GP asthma clinics offer advice and treatment. Ask about the seasonal flu jab.

Symptoms of severe asthma

Symptoms include repeated coughing and wheezing, shortness of breath and bringing up phlegm. Symptoms often get worse at night.

Call 999 to seek immediate medical assistance if your child has severe symptoms of asthma.

1

My child seems to wheeze and cough a lot, it seems to get worse at night.

2

Have you tried reducing any possible amounts of dust around the home? Do you smoke?
Have you talked to your health visitor?

3

If symptoms persist see your GP. If your child has a serious asthma attack **call 999**.

Source: Department of Health, Birth to five 2009