

Asthma

What is it?

Asthma affects the small airways of the lungs. People of all ages may be affected by Asthma. When people with Asthma are exposed to certain 'triggers', their sensitive airways narrow making it difficult for them to breathe. The airways narrow due to swelling and inflammation, and the muscles around the airways tighten and extra mucus may be produced.

- ♦ The prevalence of Asthma in Australia is high by international standards.
- ♦ In Victoria, approx 550,000 people are currently receiving treatment for Asthma.
- ♦ Asthma affects approx 1 in 9 children and 1 in 10 adults.

There is currently no cure for Asthma, however, people who have well managed Asthma can lead full and productive lives.

ASTHMA

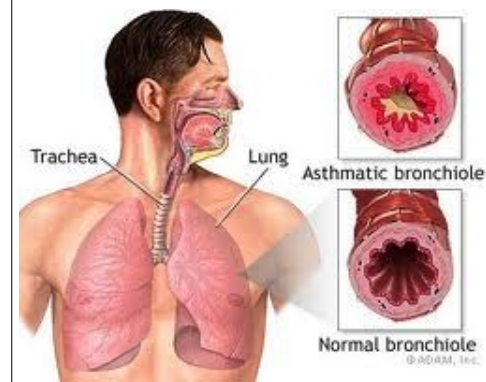
This brochure has been produced as a resource for our patients. Any questions regarding your health should be discussed with your doctor.

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Burwood HealthCare

PATIENT HEALTH INFORMATION



ASTHMA

Asthma

Do you have:

- ♦ Wheezing (a raspy sound on breathing)
- ♦ Coughing (particularly at night)
- ♦ Shortness of breath
- ♦ Tightness in the chest

These symptoms may not be present at one time and may vary from person to person. When a person has Asthma, there are various things which can trigger an Asthma attack.



Asthma Triggers:

- ⇒ Viral Infections (colds and flu)
- ⇒ Tobacco Smoke
- ⇒ Exercise
- ⇒ Allergens (such as pollens, moulds, dust mites, animal hair)
- ⇒ Weather and Temperature Changes
- ⇒ Chemicals and Strong Smells
- ⇒ Food Additives, Colourings and Flavourings
- ⇒ Certain Drugs (such as Aspirin)
- ⇒ Stress, Anxiety

Asthma Management:

Knowledge is the key to good Asthma management. This includes learning to recognize the triggers and avoiding them if possible. It is also important to know what to do when you or your child has an Asthma attack.



Some Tips:

- * Regularly review your Asthma with your doctor and Asthma Educator.
- * Avoid medications that trigger Asthma. Discuss this with your doctor.
- * Exercise regularly (in warm humid air rather than intensely in cold, dry air).
- * Keep the home well ventilated. If possible, remove carpets, feather or down doonas, soft toys and furnishings.
- * Avoid outdoor activities on windy, spring days when grasses and pollens may be a trigger.
- * Develop coping strategies which will help to minimize stress and anxiety.
- * Consult a dietitian regarding foods and food additives to avoid.



FURTHER INFORMATION

Burwood Health Care

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Asthma Foundation of Victoria

Asthma facts, programs, events, helpline, advice, education and counselling updates. Metro and country community seminars.

Ph: 1800 645 130
www.asthma.org.au

The Australian Lung Foundation

Extensive information on lung health, treatment and prevention of lung disease, plus details of patient support groups in Australia.

Ph: 1800 654 301
www.lungfoundation.com.au

National Asthma Council Australia

Information, management and advice on Asthma.

Ph: 03 9929 4333
www.nationalasthma.org.au