



What causes asthma?

Asthma can be inherited and there may be many family members with asthma. Sometimes your child may not have any family history of asthma.

What are triggers of asthma?

If your child has asthma, his or her airways are more sensitive than normal. Their airways can get irritated and tighten very easily by a variety of things called “triggers.” It is important to try to discover what those triggers are for your child and to avoid them as much as possible. Some frequent triggers are:

- **Infections:** Viruses such as the common cold or bacterial infections such as pneumonia or sinusitis are the most common cause of asthma attacks.
- **Exercise:** The vast majority of people with asthma can develop wheeze, cough, or shortness of breath when they exercise. Exercise-triggered symptoms typically develop several minutes prolonged exercise. Symptoms usually resolve with rest over 30 to 60 minutes.
- **Weather:** Cold air, hot, humid air, changes in barometric pressure, rain, thunderstorms, or wind may be provocative factors for asthma in individual patients.
- **Environmental irritants**
 - Tobacco smoke
 - Air pollution (exhaust fumes from automobiles)
 - Odors, fragrances, chemicals in sprays
 - Unventilated space heaters (kerosene or gas) and fireplaces
 - Odors and gases released from new carpets, furniture, or other materials in new homes or buildings
- **Allergens:** Things to which your child might be allergic that can cause sneezing, itchy eyes, and runny nose. If the lungs become reactive to these allergens, it can cause an asthma attack.
 - Pollens (grasses, weed and trees)
 - Molds and dust mites
 - Animals with fur or hair
 - Cockroach droppings
 - Mice
- **Emotional stress:** crying or laughing hard