

Bronchial Asthma

Asthma: is a chronic disease of the respiratory system in which the airway constricts, becomes inflamed, and is lined with excessive amounts of mucus, often in response to one or more triggers. These episodes may be triggered by such things as exposure to an environmental stimulant (allergen). This airway narrowing causes symptoms that range from mild to life-threatening, it can be controlled with a combination of drugs and environmental changes. It can occur at any age and it is the most chronic disease of childhood.

Signs and Symptoms

1. A wheezing sound while breathing.
2. Cough with mucus. The cough often recurs and it may last more than a week.
3. Shortness of breath (dyspnea): It feels as if you can't get enough air into your lungs.
4. Chest tightness: Chest may feel tight in cold weather or during exercise. Chest tightness may be one of the first signs that the asthma is getting worse.

Causes and predisposing factors of Asthma

1. Allergy is the strongest predisposing factor in the development of asthma.
2. Chronic exposure to airway irritants or allergens. Common allergens can be **seasonal:** (grass, tree, weed pollens); or **perennial** (mold, dust, roaches, or animals especially cats).
3. Common triggers for asthma symptoms and exacerbation in patients with asthma include **airway irritants** (air pollutants, cold, heat, weather changes, strong odor or perfumes, smoke), **exertion, stress, or emotional upset, laughing, sinusitis, and gastro-esophageal reflux.**
4. Smoking cigarettes.
5. It can run in the family.
6. Dust and dust mites, roaches, certain types of clothes, pets, horses, detergents, soaps, certain foods, molds, and pollens.
7. Some medications, such as some of those which treat heart diseases and high blood pressure may cause asthma symptoms or make asthma worse.
8. Viral infection especially in children.

Treatment

It's important to follow your doctor's advice regarding your treatment and medications which includes Bronchodilators and Inhalers.

The treatments will help the air tubes in your lungs to relax and help you breathe more easily by reducing the swelling and inflammation in the air tubes.

Prevention

1. Patient with recurrent asthma should undergo tests to identify the substances that precipitate the symptoms.
2. If the attacks are seasonal, pollens can be strongly suspected, so the patient is instructed to avoid the causative agents whenever possible.
3. Avoid smoking and strong perfumes.
4. Practice breathing exercises.