



All about asthma



This book is about asthma

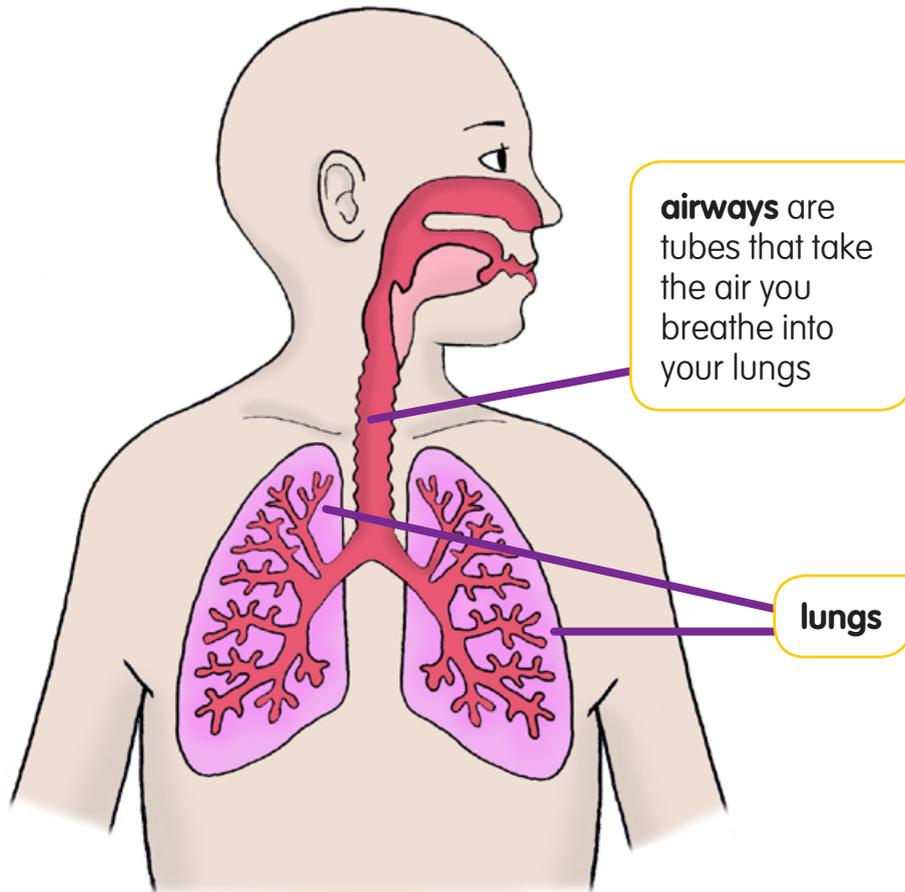
You can get asthma at any age.

Sometimes it starts when you are a child.

Sometimes it starts when you are an adult.

It is hard to say what causes asthma.

This book can help you look after your asthma.



airways are tubes that take the air you breathe into your lungs

lungs

What happens if you have asthma?

If you have asthma your **airways** don't work as well.

- You cough a lot.
- You **wheeze**.
- It is hard to breathe.
- Your chest feels tight.

You might have all of these symptoms.
You might only have some of them.

Wheeze – a noisy whistling sound in your chest when you breathe.

What can make your asthma worse?

Some things can make your asthma worse.

Things that make your asthma worse are called triggers.

Everyone has different triggers.

Most people have more than one trigger.

Here are some triggers



pollen



stress



perfume



changes in weather



some animals



colds



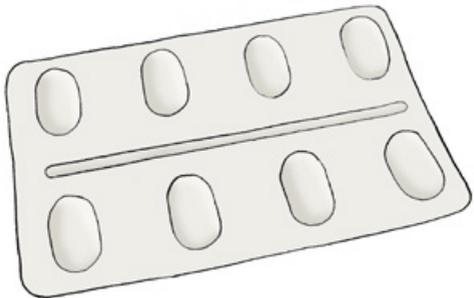
pollution



cigarette smoke



mould and damp



Medicines that can help your asthma

Inhalers

There are two kinds of inhaler.

One is called a reliever.

One is called a preventer.

Inhalers can be different shapes.

They can be different colours.

Inhalers are sometimes called puffers or pumps.

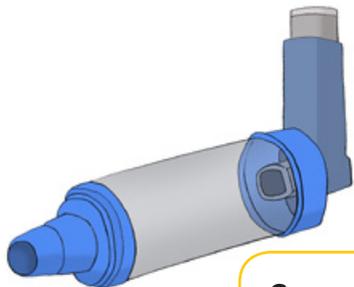
You might have tablets for your asthma too.



Reliever inhaler



Preventer inhaler



Spacer

Relievers

Reliever inhalers are usually blue.

You take them when your asthma feels bad.

They make it easier to breathe.

Keep your blue inhaler with you all the time.

Preventers

Preventer inhalers can be different colours and shapes.

You take them every day even if you feel well.

They make your airways work better.

Spacer

Sometimes you use a spacer with

your inhaler. A spacer is a plastic tube that helps you get the medicine into your lungs.



Asthma attack

Sometimes your asthma might get worse.

You are having an asthma attack if:

- you need to use your blue inhaler a lot
- your chest feels tight
- you are coughing and wheezing a lot
- you cannot breathe well
- it is hard to talk.

What to do if you are having an asthma attack



1. Sit up straight - don't lie down. Try to stay calm



2. Take one puff of your inhaler every minute until you feel better. You can take up to ten puffs of your blue inhaler.



3. If you don't feel better after ten puffs of your blue inhaler, call 999 for help.

Call **999** if you are worried at any time.

Will I have to go to hospital?

You might have to go to hospital.

Take your inhaler with you.

What to do after an asthma attack

Go and see your doctor the same day.

Your doctor will check if your asthma is OK.

You might need to see your doctor again soon.

This is to make sure your asthma is still OK.

Going to the doctor about your asthma

Every year you should go to your doctor for an asthma review. This is a check up for your asthma.

Your doctor can help you look after your asthma at other times too.

Your doctor will:

- use a **peak flow meter** to check your breathing
- check you are using your inhaler properly
- see if your asthma is better or worse
- talk to you about looking after your asthma.

Peak flow meter – a tube you blow into. It tells the doctor how good your breathing is.





Eat healthy food



Do some exercise

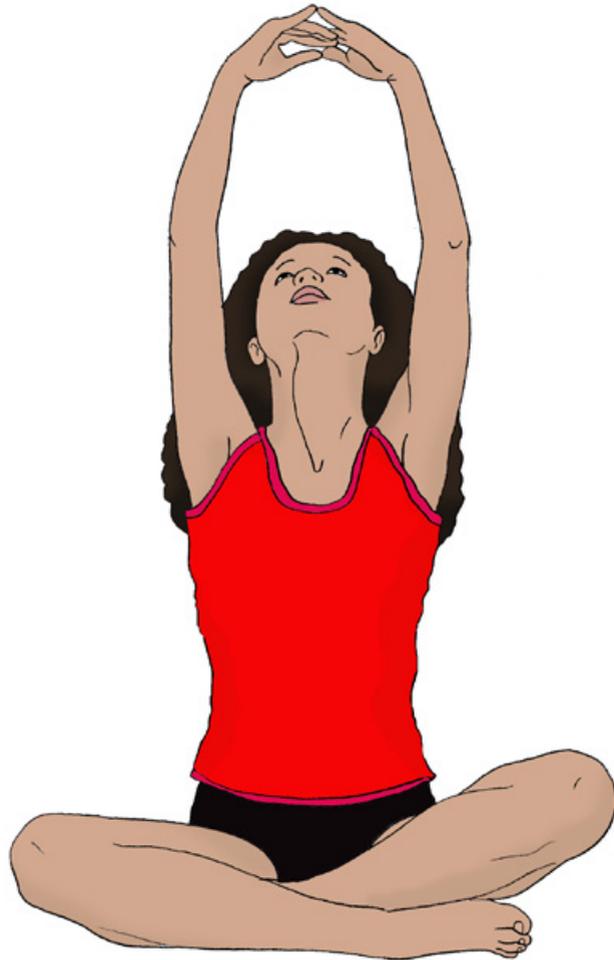


Do things that
make you feel
happy and relaxed

Being healthy is good for your asthma

Here are some things you can do
to be healthy:

- eat **healthy food**
- do some **exercise**
- do things that make you **feel happy
and relaxed.**



Exercise

Exercise is good for you.

There are lots of ways to keep fit.

Keep your blue inhaler with you when you exercise.

What if exercise makes your asthma worse?

Talk to your doctor before you start exercising.

For some people exercise is a trigger.

Start with gentle exercise like walking or **yoga**.

Yoga – gentle stretching where you put your body into different positions.



Stop smoking

Smoking is bad for you.

Smoking is bad for your asthma.

Someone smoking near you can make your asthma worse.

Talk to your doctor if you smoke.

Your doctor can help you to stop.

There are groups to support you.

Stopping smoking is good for your asthma.

These people have asthma



If you look after your asthma you can enjoy lots of different things

Take your preventer inhaler every day to look after your asthma

Asthma UK is a charity.

We want to help people look after their asthma well.

If you have any questions about your asthma speak to your doctor or call our Helpline.

 **0300 222 5800**

www.asthma.org.uk



Thanks to these people who helped us from The Elfrida Society: Maz Bello, Colin Dulice, Savas Ibrahim, Vanessa Martin, Andrew Naylor, June Patterson, Pauline Robertson and Yvonne Swift. The Elfrida Society is a charity for adults with learning disabilities.



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