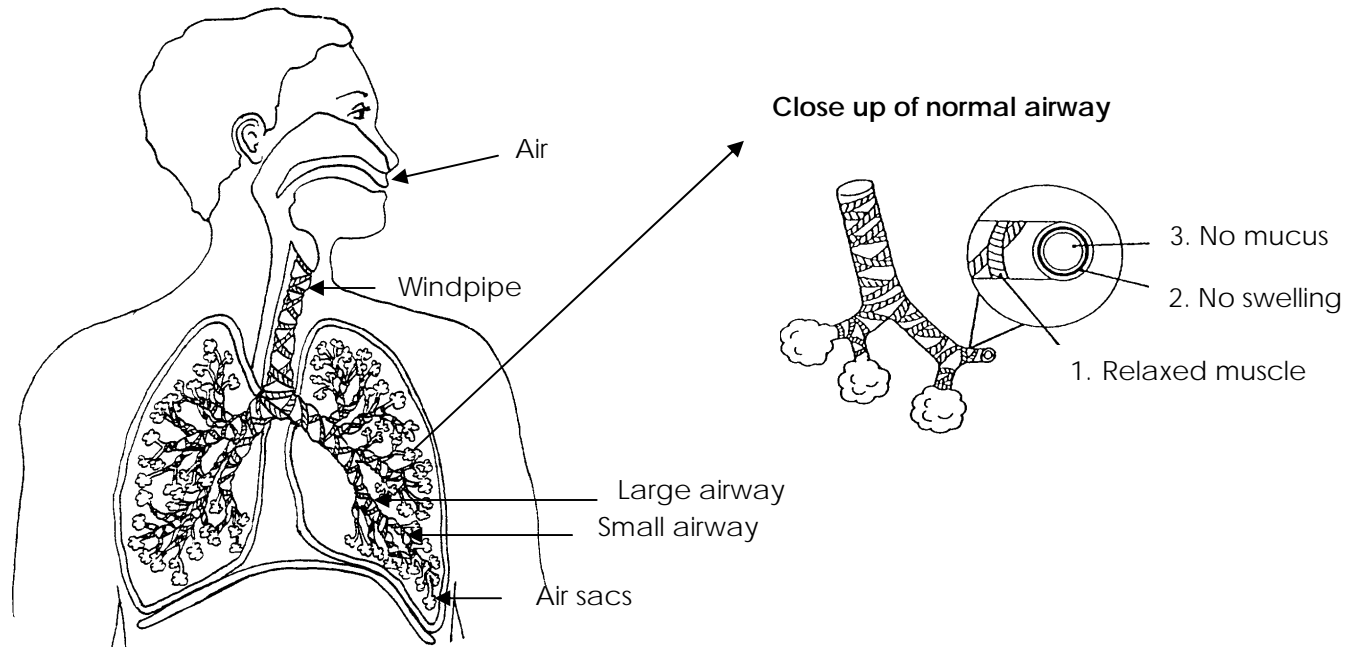


Asthma

Asthma is a chronic (long term) disease of the lungs. Even when you have no symptoms, you still have asthma. It is important to follow your Asthma Action Plan to control your asthma. (See Asthma Action Plan.)

Normal breathing

When you breathe, air goes in through your nose and mouth. It flows down your windpipe, through your large and small airways and into the air sacs.



Asthma episode or flare-up:

During an asthma episode:

1. The muscles around the airways tighten, making the airways smaller.
2. The lining of the airways becomes swollen.
3. Thick mucus forms, blocking small airways.

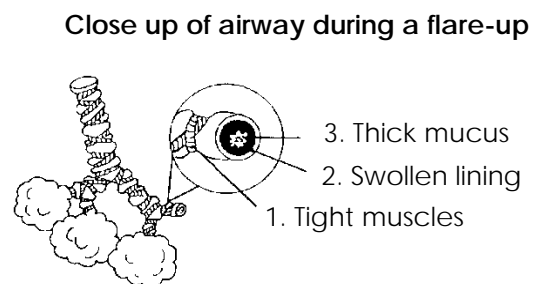
These changes make it hard for air to flow in and out of the lungs. You may have one or all of the following symptoms:

- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness

What causes asthma episodes?

Things that cause asthma episodes are called triggers. Each person may have different triggers. Triggers can be colds, smoke, allergies, or exercise.

Learn what triggers your asthma, so you can avoid them. (See Asthma Trigger Control.)



How to treat episodes

You will work with your doctor to develop an **Asthma Action Plan**. Your Asthma Action Plan is a plan for how to manage your asthma on a daily basis as well as what to do when your asthma gets worse.

Your plan will include:

- Triggers and how to avoid them
- Medicine to take every day (Green Zone)
- Early warning signs of an asthma episode and how to treat it (Yellow Zone)
- When to call the doctor (Red Zone)

Asthma Action Plan Zones

Green zone means: I feel good and have no symptoms.	Take your controller medicine every day.
Yellow zone means: I do not feel good. You may have early warning signs such as cough with cold.	It is important to start your rescue medicine now.
Red zone means: I feel awful. You may be coughing all the time and have a hard time breathing.	Take these medicines now and call your doctor.

Call 911 if you are worried about getting through the next 30 minutes.

How do I know if asthma is under control?

The goal is to be in the Green Zone. Asthma is under control if you can:

- Sleep all night
- Not cough or wheeze during the day or at night
- Be active
- Not miss school or work

Follow-up care:

- See your doctor every 6 months
- Follow your asthma action plan
- Have refills for your medicine
- Share your asthma plan with school and daycare

Questions?

This sheet is not specific to your child, but provides general information. If you have any questions, please call the clinic. We recommend that you and your child attend an asthma education program to learn more ways to control asthma. Ask your doctor, nurse, or the American Lung Association for information about available programs.

For more reading material about this and other health topics, please call or visit the Family Resource Center library, or visit our Web site: www.childrensmn.org.