



Fact Sheet

ASTHMA

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Do you or your Child

- * Get breathless or wheezy easily?
- * Have a dry cough that won't go away?
- * Wake at night with chest tightness?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions you or your child may have asthma.

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a condition that affects the lungs. When you have asthma the tubes that carry air down into your lungs are unusually sensitive. They can easily become inflamed and swollen making it harder for the air to get in and out of the lungs.

It can start at any age. Men and women, young and old, all races and nationalities can develop asthma.

Asthma tends to run in families and maybe associated with other conditions such as hay fever and eczema. Asthma can become worse when you are exposed to certain trigger factors, however asthma can be treated.

Make sure that you visit your Pegasus family doctor and tell him if you or your child have any of the above symptoms. He/she can provide you with a proper diagnosis and appropriate treatment

IF YOU ALREADY HAVE ASTHMA

Is your asthma controlled?

- Have you been woken at night by your asthma?
- Do you have symptoms that interfere with your daily activities?
- Do you have to use your asthma reliever more than 3-4 times per week?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions you need to talk to your Pegasus family team about your asthma. Your doctor can prescribe asthma treatment that can help prevent your asthma symptoms from occurring.

Ways in which you can manage your asthma

- * Get to know which trigger factors affect your asthma. Different people react to different triggers but common ones include:

- House dust and dust mites
- Pollens and moulds
- Cigarette smoke and fumes
- Exercise
- Animals
- Throat and chest infections

Trying to avoid exposure to allergens and triggers that cause asthma is an important step in the management of asthma.

- * Always take your medication regularly as prescribed by your family doctor.

- * Have a self-management plan written with your practice team.
- * Get to know your asthma and act on any changing symptoms by following the guidelines in your asthma self-management plan.
- * Visit your Pegasus Family practice regularly to review your asthma and medications.
- * Stop smoking
- * Those aged over 65 or those with asthma who need regular preventive medication should get immunised against influenza.

How your family practice team can help.

If you or a relative have asthma your family practice team can help you with:

- * Medication and advice on how and when to use it
- * How to monitor your asthma by changing symptoms or performing a simple breathing test.
- * Advice on triggers and how to manage them
- * Support for stopping smoking with PEGS - our smoking cessation programme.
- * Free immunisation against influenza for those aged 65 and those with asthma.
- * Advice on local support groups such as the Asthma Society.
- * A self-management plan written with your doctor so you both know how to stay well and to help you recognise when you are becoming unwell and what to do about it.