

## Asthma Flare-ups/Attacks

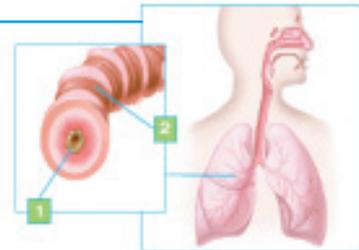
During an asthma flare-up your airways get smaller. This is because you have recently breathed in one of your asthma triggers and it is causing your airways to swell-up. Talk to your asthma doctor about how to know when you are having an asthma flare-up. Most happen gradually and get to a point that it really bothers you, while others seem to happen all of a sudden. If you pay close attention to your symptoms you can take action early and not be caught off-guard.

### What happens during a flare-up/attack?

Two main things happen that make it hard to breathe:

1. The airways swell and fill with mucus.
2. The muscles around the airways get tight.

Both of these things make your airway opening smaller. Smaller airways make it harder to breathe.



### Early Warning Signs

You may have warning signs hours to days before a flare-up/attack begins. Everyone's early warning signs are different. Know which ones apply to you:

- Coughing, often starts only at nighttime or early morning.
- Wheezing.
- Chest tightness.
- More mucus.
- Drop in Peak Flow Reading.
- Needing to use your Quick-relief medicine **more than two times a week!**

## What should you do during an asthma flare-up/attack?

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- Follow your written Asthma Action Plan and directions from your doctor, based on your asthma symptoms and/or peak flow readings.
- Take Quick-relief medicines as directed by your doctor. Often this requires repeated doses. Example, 4–8 puffs (wait a minute between each puff).
- Relax! Try to breathe slowly and deeply.
- Get help. Tell someone if you notice it's getting hard to breathe.
- If your fingertips or lips are turning blue, you are unable to walk or talk, **call 911**.

*Source: 2017 GINA Report, Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention*