

## What is Asthma?

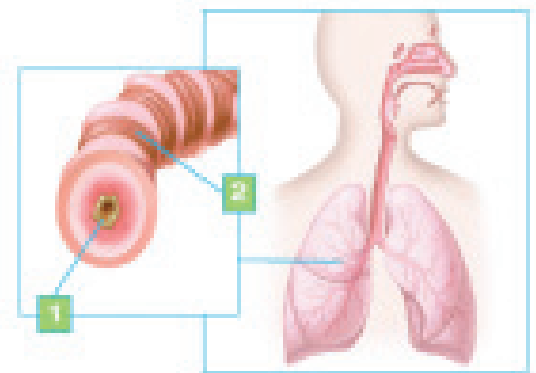
Asthma is a chronic disease that affects the lungs. It makes it hard to breathe. There is no cure for asthma. If you take action to learn more about it and work with your doctor, it can be managed. You can enjoy a normal, active life.

Asthma signs and symptoms can be mild, moderate, or severe. They can change from day to day. Some people only have a few symptoms of asthma, like cough that lasts for long periods of time. While others have more or all symptoms. Asthma symptoms may include:

- **Wheezing** – a whistling noise when you breathe.
- **Coughing.**
- **Tightness in Chest** – this feels like someone is sitting on your chest.
- **Shortness of breath** – hard to catch your breath.
- **Trouble breathing at night and in the early morning.**
- **Mucus** – phlem or sputum.

When you breathe, air goes in and out of your lungs through small tubes called airways. In asthma, two things happen in the airways that make it hard to breathe:

1. Inflammation (irritation) – swelling of the airways and extra mucus.
2. Muscle tightening – muscles around the airways get tight.



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