

# WHAT IS ASTHMA?

The breathing tubes in the lungs of people with asthma are swollen and get tight, and that makes it hard to breathe.



## WHAT TRIGGERS AN ASTHMA ATTACK?



### Getting a cold or the flu

*This is the most common trigger, so you should always watch for problems with your asthma when you feel like you are coming down with a cold.*



### Air pollution



### Running hard



Things you might be allergic to, including dust, mold, pollen, pets, insects, and rodent droppings



### Tobacco smoke



Getting very excited, angry, sad, or scared



Strong smells  
(pleasant or unpleasant)



Weather changes

## HOW IS ASTHMA TREATED?



There are different medicines that are used to treat asthma. Some are taken by breathing them in, some are taken by mouth. There are 2 kinds of asthma medicines:

### 1 RESCUE MEDICINES

Rescue medicines work right away when you need them, but they **don't last very long**. The most common rescue medicine is albuterol. You should take albuterol when you are having trouble breathing, but if you need to use it more than once in a while, then you may need to take a controller medicine. Rescue medicines help the tightness but not the swelling in the air passages.

### 2 CONTROLLER MEDICINES

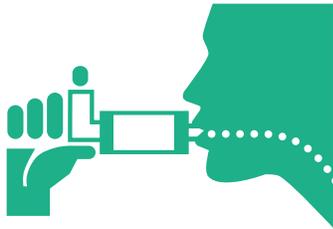
Controller medicines get rid of the swelling and congestion in the passageways of your lungs, and help prevent asthma attacks, but they don't help your breathing when you are having an asthma attack. **Controller medicines need to be taken every day, even when you feel well, in order to work.**

# YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR ASTHMA

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO INHALE MEDICINE:

Rescue medicine (albuterol) can be taken with a nebulizer or a metered-dose inhaler.

Controller medicine can be taken with a nebulizer, a metered-dose inhaler, or a dry powder inhaler.



## SPACERS AND VALVED HOLDING CHAMBERS:

When you use a spacer or valved holding chamber with your inhaler, the medicine gets down into your lungs, where it needs to go to do the most good.

When you inhale medicine through a metered dose inhaler, most of it stays in your mouth or throat.

**If you use a controller medicine that comes as a metered-dose inhaler, you should always take it with a chamber. Your rescue medicine will also work better, if you take it with the chamber!**

You do not use a spacer/chamber with a nebulizer or dry powder inhaler.

## NO SMOKING!

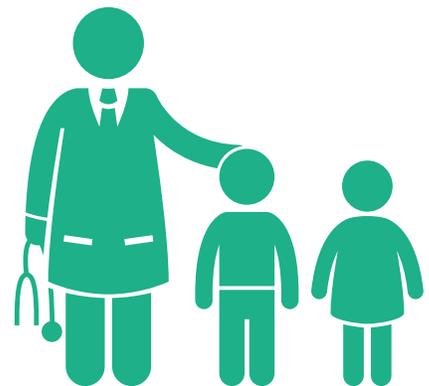
Cigarette smoke (and any other smoke) irritates the lungs and makes asthma worse! People with asthma should stay away from smoke, and deserve a smoke-free environment.

- Nobody should smoke in the house they live in (even when they aren't there)
- Nobody should smoke in the car they drive in (even when they aren't there)
- Even the clothes of people who smoke can smell like smoke, and irritate the lungs, making it hard to breathe for people with asthma

## TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR

**Many children with asthma can do better if they take an asthma controller medicine.** Ask the doctor about controller medicines especially if your child has any of the following symptoms:

- 1** Has asthma symptoms like coughing or wheezing more than 2 times a week
- 2** Is waking at night with breathing problems more than once a week
- 3** Has been to the emergency room with trouble breathing more than once in the last year



**WHERE YOUR CHILD CAN RECEIVE MEDICAL CARE AND OTHER SERVICES FOR ASTHMA:**

**Bon Secours Richmond Health System**  
[bonsecours.com/](http://bonsecours.com/)  
Richmond  
(804) 359-WELL(9355)

**Children's Hospital of Richmond at VCU UCAN Community Asthma Program**  
[chrichmond.org/UCAN](http://chrichmond.org/UCAN)  
(804) 628-UCAN(8226)

**HCA Virginia Health System**  
[hcavirginia.com](http://hcavirginia.com)  
(804) 483-2730

**Richmond City Health District Healthy Homes Initiative**  
[HealthyHomesRCHD.com](http://HealthyHomesRCHD.com)  
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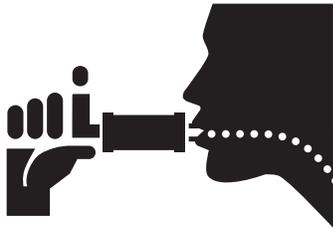
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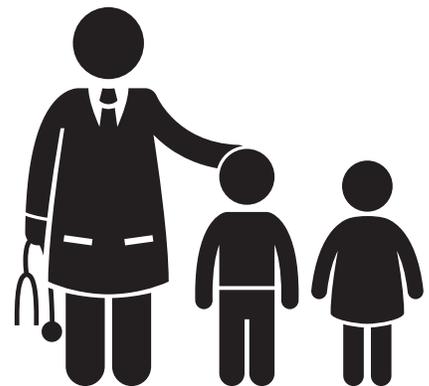
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