



## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that affects your airway. The cause for asthma is not known and there is no cure for this disease. There are ways to try to prevent symptoms and medications to manage the disease.



**Two things happen with asthma:**

- Muscles get tight around your airway.
- The airway becomes irritated, swollen and blocked by mucus.

When this happens, it can become difficult to breathe.

## Symptoms of Asthma

- Wheezing
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Feeling weak and tired

## Asthma Attacks

This is when asthma symptoms suddenly get worse. Call your doctor or follow your asthma action plan.

## Call 911 if:

- Your fingers or lips turn blue
- Your breathing is very hard and fast
- You are not able to walk or talk
- Your ribs show when you try to take a breath in

If you have any of these you need to get medical attention right away.

# What is Asthma?

## Diagnosis: Knowing if You Have Asthma

The only way to know if you have asthma is to see a doctor.

Your doctor can test your breathing and lung function to see if you have asthma.



## Medication

**There are two kinds of medication to treat the symptoms of asthma.**

- **Long Term Controller** medications are given to help prevent airway swelling and mucus build up.  
These medications must be taken every day in order to work.
- **Quick Relief or Rescue** medications are given to relax the muscles around the airway. These medications work fast.  
**Always carry this with you.**



## Asthma Action Plan

If you have asthma, talk to your doctor about an asthma action plan.

This is a written plan that tells you how and when to use all of your medications and what to do in an emergency. Your family, school and any caretakers should also have a copy.

**For questions and resources call 1 (833) 327-8462.  
[www.SouthSideKidsAsthma.org](http://www.SouthSideKidsAsthma.org)**