

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a serious chronic lung disease that can be controlled by taking medicine and making changes in your environment even though it cannot be cured. The basic cause of asthma is not yet known, but it tends to run in families. It is common in children or adults with allergies and if not treated correctly, can result in death. Currently, 12% of children in Louisiana have asthma and it is the number one reason children miss school.

What Causes Asthma Events?

Triggers such as allergies, colds, tobacco smoke, or exercise can cause asthma episodes. Eighty percent of people with asthma have allergies to airborne substances such as:

- trees
- grass
- weed
- mold
- animal dander
- dust mites
- cockroach particles
- tobacco smoke

Children who have high levels of cockroach droppings in their homes are more likely to have childhood asthma than children whose homes have low levels.

The Main Signs and Symptoms of Asthma are:

Asthma episodes rarely come on suddenly. Often there are clues or early warning signs that an episode may occur. Some early warning signs may be runny nose, coughing, shortness of breath, inability to sleeping at night, inability to exercise, prolonged respiratory infections, or a decrease of lung capacity.

The main signs and symptoms of asthma are:

- coughing
- shortness of breath
- wheezing
- tightness of the chest
- waking up at night with symptoms
- coughing with exercise
- coughing more than 2 weeks or wheezing after viral infections

Visit our website at: www.asthma.dhh.louisiana.gov