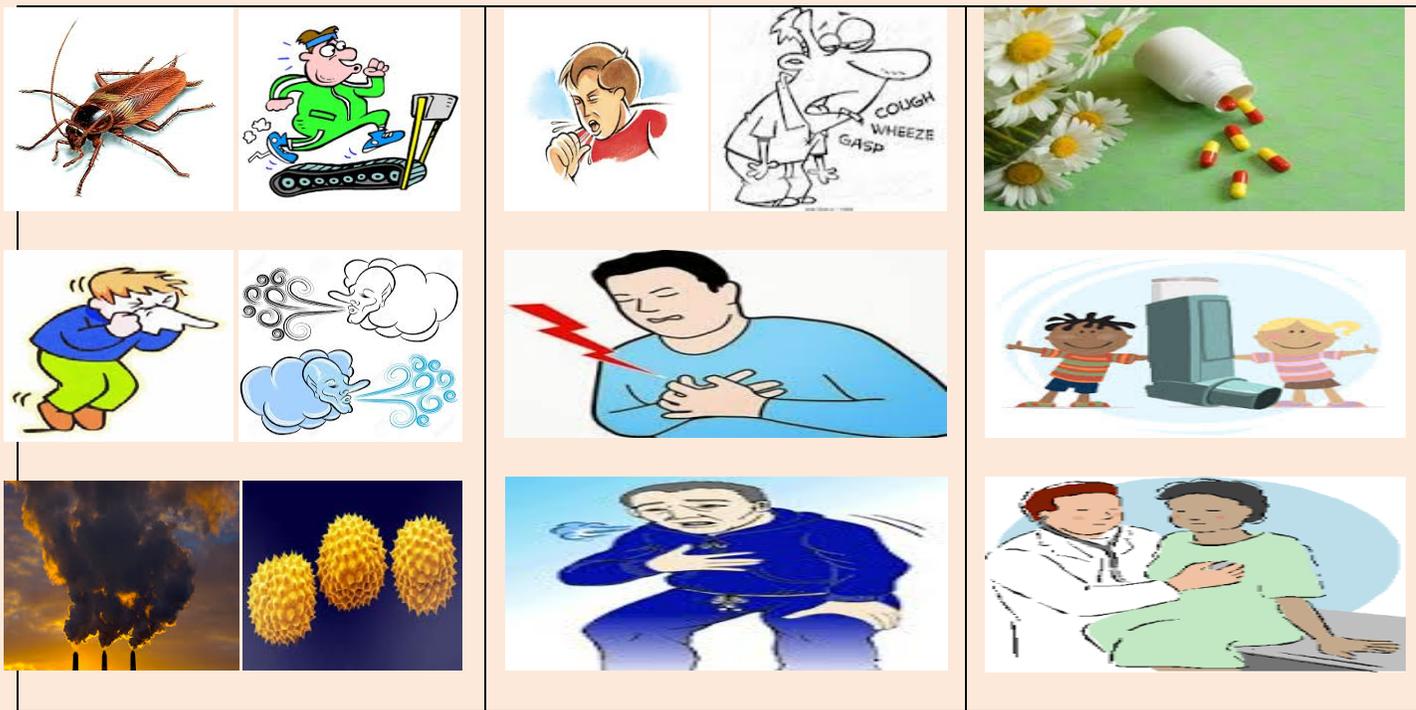


Asthma (AZ – ma) is a chronic (long term) lung disease that inflames and narrows the airways. People who have asthma have inflamed airways. The inflammation makes the airways swollen and very sensitive. The airways tend to react strongly to certain inhaled substances. When the airways react, the muscles around them tighten. The swelling also can worsen, making the airways even narrower.

Causes	Symptoms	Prevention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airborne allergens such as pollen, animal dander, mold, cockroaches and dust mites • Respiratory infections such as common cold • Physical activity (excessive) • Air pollutants and irritants such as smoke or cold air 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coughing from asthma often is worse at night or early in the morning, making it hard to sleep • Wheezing is a whistling or squeaky sound that occurs when you breathe • Chest tightness • Shortness of breath 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use medicines as your doctor prescribes • Identify and try to avoid things that make your asthma worse • Keep track of your asthma symptoms and level of control • Get regular checkups for your asthma



How is asthma diagnosed? Most children who have asthma develop their first symptoms before 5 years of age. However, asthma in young children (aged 0 to 5 years) can be hard to diagnose. A young child who has frequent wheezing with colds or respiratory infections is more likely to have asthma if:

- One or both parents have asthma
- The child has signs of allergies, including the allergic skin condition eczema or other airborne allergens
- The child wheezes even when he or she doesn't have a cold or other infection

The most certain way to diagnose asthma is with a lung function test, a medical history, and a physical exam. However, it's hard to do lung function tests in children younger than 5 years. Thus, doctors usually take into consideration children's medical histories, signs and symptoms and physical exams to make a diagnosis.

The views expressed in this newsletter are suggestions and opinions and are not binding.