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What is Asthma? Asthma **can't be cured, but it can be successfully managed!**

- **Asthma** is a chronic (long-term) lung disease that **inflames and narrows the airways**.
 - Inflamed airways are swollen and very sensitive. They react strongly to certain substances like tobacco smoke, chemicals, sprays, dust, mold, and pollen. This narrows the airways and less air is able to flow into your lungs. This reaction can cause asthma symptoms.
- Symptoms include :
 - **Wheezing** – a whistling or squeaky sound when you breathe.
 - **Chest tightness** – like something is squeezing or sitting on your chest.
 - **Shortness of breath** – people may feel out of breath or like they can't get air out of their lungs.
 - **Coughing** – it is often worse at night or early in the morning, making it hard to sleep.
- It is important to **treat symptoms when you first notice them. Talk to your doctor** about things that seem to make your asthma worse.

4/12 (Easter weekend)

Asthma Treatment

- The *goal of asthma treatment is control*. Good treatment will:
 - **Prevent long-term symptoms** like coughing and shortness of breath.
 - **Reduce your need for quick-relief medicines** and help you maintain good lung function.
 - Allow you to be involved in regular activities and sleep through the night.
 - **Prevent asthma attacks** that could result in trips to the emergency room.
- To reach this goal you need to be an active partner with your doctor. Work with them to follow an action plan that works for you, and avoiding triggers that can make your symptoms flare up.
 - An **action plan** shows treatment - what kinds of medicines to take and when to take them.
- **Track your asthma!** Record your symptoms every day – what happened, for how long, etc.
- Help family members by not smoking at home or in the car!

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Understanding Asthma Medicines

- Asthma is treated with 2 kinds of medicine: long-term control and quick-relief medicine.
 - **Long-term medicines** reduce airway inflammation and prevent asthma symptoms.
 - This type of medicine does not give quick relief from symptoms.
 - If your doctor prescribes long-term medicine, take it every day to prevent symptoms.
 - **Quick-relief medicines** help relieve asthma symptoms when they flare up.
 - This type of medicine is used to relax tight muscles around your airways when your symptoms are flaring up.
 - Carry quick-relief medicines like inhalers with you in case you need it. If your child has asthma, make sure their school or caregiver has their quick-relief medicines and understand how and when to use them.

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What can I do about seasonal and other allergies?

- **Know what you are allergic to.**
 - Keep track of your symptoms and work with a doctor to figure out what these things are.
- **Get medicine if you need it.**
 - Over-the-counter medicines like antihistamines (Benadryl, Claritin) and saline nasal sprays (like Ocean Spray) can provide relief.
 - Talk to your doctor if over-the-counter medications don't help.
- **Limit your exposure to allergens – like dust, freshly cut grass, pollen, and mold.**
 - Dry laundry in dryers instead of hanging it outside.
 - Avoid contact with freshly cut grass. Minimize outdoor activities if you are allergic to pollen.
 - Vacuum and dust inside your house. If you are allergic to animals, keep them outside.
 - Clean your house and start with the bedroom. Wash pillows, sheets, and blankets weekly in hot water or in cold water with bleach or detergent.