



The Truth About Asthma!

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What is Asthma

What Is Asthma?

Most of us have probably heard of asthma, right? Some of us may have seen asthma attacks in real life while others may have seen it only in the movies, portrayed by some actors who seem to be having difficulty breathing, with their chests heaving up and down violently.

What is asthma?

Well, scientifically and medically speaking, asthma is a chronic disease that greatly affects the airways of humans. Airways are the tubes that carry air in and out of our lungs. Once the airways are compromised, breathing becomes difficult and may even cause more serious complications.

When an individual has asthma, his or her airways are swollen which makes it difficult for them to breathe. In addition to that, the inflammation of the airways makes it more sensitive to allergens and other irritating substances existing in the air. When the already inflamed airways are triggered by certain allergens, it reacts adversely by becoming narrower resulting in less air flowing to the lungs.

Breathing becomes very difficult and is characterized by wheezing (a sort of whistling sound), a terrible dry cough (others coin it as “dog cough”), and tightness in the chest.

Can Asthma Be Cured?

Even with all the new medicines and technology today, it is sad to say that asthma cannot be cured by any kind of medicine or treatment currently known to science.

However, it can be controlled so that people can experience fewer symptoms and can lead normal, healthy and active lives, without having to worry much about their asthma attacks.

Asthma Attacks Differ From One Person To Another

Having an asthma attack is “relative” because one person may breathe easier or harder than another person who is also having an asthma attack. The intensity of the asthma attack and the difficulty in breathing may greatly differ from one person to another. That’s why whenever someone experiences an asthma attack it is highly advisable to seek for medical assistance immediately since no asthma attack is the same from previous ones.

Don't Take Asthma For Granted

Although there are some asthma attacks that are minor enough to be treated with just the "breathing in a brown paper bag" method, there are also asthma attacks that are so severe that they can damage the vital organs in the body.

How could this happen? Well, the organs need oxygen to function, right? If the asthma attack is just taken for granted, the body's intake of oxygen becomes lesser and lesser and eventually, the organs may fail to function due to the lack of oxygen. Severe asthma attacks that are just taken for granted or left untreated usually result in death.

See A Doctor Regularly

Once a person is diagnosed with asthma, it is highly advisable that he or she visits the doctor regularly for close monitoring. With close monitoring fewer complications are experienced making people with asthma less prone to other respiratory illnesses.

The doctor will also be able to advise asthmatics about any newly discovered allergens to avoid in order and control their asthma. Different individuals have different triggering factors and allergens that's why a visit to a doctor

is necessary. The doctor will specifically assess and trace down the triggering and underlying factors for an individual's asthma attacks. The asthmatic can then successfully avoid these triggers in the future.

No Need To Feel "Sick"

In the past, individuals who were diagnosed with asthma felt deprived and very sick up to the point that they refused to participate in normal activities that required respiratory activity and exposure to the outside world.

However, thanks to the developments and innovations in the medical field, asthma can be controlled by medicines. Now, asthmatic people can participate in daily activities and live normal lives without having to worry about their respiratory disease. As long as they know their limitations, asthmatic people can live normal and healthy lives.

What Causes Asthma Attacks

What Causes Asthma Attacks

Asthma can be a deadly disease. That's why we should be aware of and vigilant about what causes asthma attacks so that we can steer away from them. No one accurately knows exactly what causes asthma attacks; but thanks to the many studies and research, distinct triggers are already identified.

Interrelated Factors

The cause of asthma is said to be certain interaction of environmental and genetic factors that researchers do not fully grasp and understand up to now. Studies are ongoing and hopefully we will have more answers one day soon.

It is said that the abovementioned factors greatly influence the severity and intensity of an individual's asthma. The environmental and genetic factors are also said to play a great role in determining how well an individual can respond to the asthma medications prescribed to him or her.

The Air That We Breathe

Asthma can be triggered by poor air quality caused by pollution from traffic, factories, aerosols sprays, etc. Tobacco and cigarette smoke are also well-known triggers of asthma. People who smoke tobacco or cigarettes are more prone to having asthma than those people who don't smoke.

However, non-smokers are not really assured that they are free from the risks of asthma. Inhaling and being exposed to second hand smoke may also cause asthma.

Allergens may also be causes of asthma because they are responsible for irritating and inflaming the airways.

Some common allergens include dust mites, pollen, molds, cockroaches and animal dander. What may be an allergen to one person may be a totally non-irritant to another person. That phenomenon just goes to prove that the causes of asthma are truly diverse and can differ from one person to another.

Other substances in the air such as smoke, chalk dust, and powder can trigger asthma especially if an individual is exposed to it frequently. For example, a teacher who has no asthma can eventually have asthma if he or

she is exposed to chalk on a daily basis. If the airways become too irritated eventually they cannot tolerate the chalk dust anymore.

Scented products such as lotions, powders and perfumes can also cause asthma especially if they have very strong odor. Cleaning solutions, gasoline fumes, paint and other substances that can affect or over-stimulate the airways are potential causes for asthma.

Maternal Cigarette Smoking

Pregnant women have a responsibility to their unborn child regarding their potential health risks. Pregnant women who smoke can cause the unborn child to acquire or develop asthma. Aside from that, the unborn child may already be prone to wheezing and serious respiratory infections.

Antibiotic Use

Usage and intake of antibiotics in early life has been said to be one of the causes of asthma in young children. It has been proposed that antibiotics make individual's vulnerable to asthma because they modify and affect the gut flora as well as the immune system. This phenomenon is also known as the hygiene hypothesis.

Psychological Stress

Who would've thought that psychological stress could cause asthma? Well, studies have proven that psychological stress or trauma caused by a child's caregiver can actually cause asthma. It has been said that too much stress can also bring about behaviors that can trigger asthma such as smoking.

It's All In The Genes

When one or both parents have asthma, it is not unusual for a child to acquire asthma because asthma can be passed on through the genes.

No Specific Cause

It must be noted that there is no one specific cause for asthma. What might be the cause for one may not be the cause for another individual. The cause(s) of asthma is/are relative and that's what makes it difficult for the researchers to pin down one definite cause. Perhaps the best thing that people should do to prevent and control asthma is to make sure that the surroundings are clean and that the exposure to strong fumes and other scented materials will be controlled appropriately.

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