

The Allergy & Asthma Clinic

www.TheAllergyClinic.com

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343-3402

Newsletter

www.theallergyclinic.com April 2022



Asthma-What You Need to Know

There are more than 25 million Americans who have been diagnosed with asthma, which is a medical condition in which the bronchial airways, which carry air into the lungs, become swollen and inflamed, causing symptoms of breathing difficulties, shortness of breath, cough and wheezing. Asthma can occur at any age, and can range from mild or moderate to severe. Once a diagnosis has been made, it is important to educate yourself as much as possible, since asthma is a chronic condition.

How Is Asthma Diagnosed?

Diagnosing asthma begins with obtaining a detailed medical history, which includes a summary of the patient's symptom history, list of medications and other medical conditions and family and environmental history. This information can help an allergy and asthma specialist determine whether symptoms are due to asthma or another medical condition or a combination of both. After a physical exam, a spirometry is usually performed. Spirometry is a test done in a doctor's office to assess your lung function by measuring how much air you inhale, how much you exhale and how quickly you exhale. These measurements can help to support a diagnosis of asthma and down the line; spirometry can also help to monitor your condition, allowing us to make adjustments to your treatment plan as necessary.

It is very frustrating when asthma starts to interfere with your daily activities, especially when it starts to affect your ability to exercise or participate in other activities that you enjoy. If asthma is affecting your work or school commitments, or your ability to sleep well at night, it is time to speak with your physician about getting your asthma under better control.

Common Asthma Triggers

- Tobacco Smoke, Fumes, Exhaust
- Dust Mite, Pollen, Mold and Animal Dander
- Poor Air Quality
- Chemicals and Perfumes and other strong scented products
- Respiratory Illnesses such as the flu
- Stress

What are the symptoms commonly associated with asthma?

- Recurrent wheezing
- Coughing
- Trouble breathing
- Chest tightness
- Symptoms that occur or worsen at night
- Symptoms that are triggered by cold air, exercise or exposure to allergens

Asthma signs and symptoms in children

Additional signs and symptoms that may signal asthma include:

- Louder or faster than normal breathing
- Frequent coughing or coughing that worsens after active play
- Coughing, clear mucus and a runny nose caused by hay fever
- Frequent missed school days
- Limited participation in physical activities

Treatment Options for Asthma

There are several treatment options available to treat asthma, depending on the severity of the disease.

- Identify triggers and reduce your exposure as much as possible. If allergies are the cause of your asthma, it is important to address this underlying issue and take steps to reduce exposure to what you are allergic to. For many patients, treatment with immunotherapy helps make them less allergic and reduces the severity of their asthma and their need for medication.
- Speak with your physician about using an anti-inflammatory product which can reduce inflammation in the bronchial airways. If you need your rescue inhaler more than 2 times a week (other than with exercise), use of an anti-inflammatory product is also usually warranted.
- If your asthma symptoms continue to flare and you are requiring treatment with oral steroids or are requiring frequent visits to the emergency room, despite your current treatment regimen, let us know so we can discuss other treatment options, including treatment with biologics, which have been approved for the treatment of moderate-to-severe asthma and are often very effective in bringing asthma under much better control.