

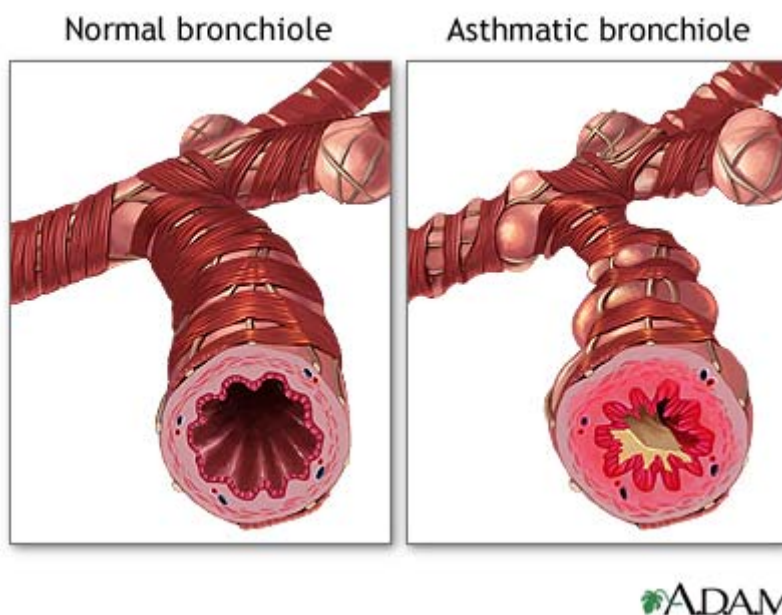
Student Health Centre

Student Health Centre

What is Asthma ?

Asthma is a condition caused by a narrowing of the airways in the lungs producing one or more of the following symptoms:-

- A troublesome cough
- Breathlessness
- Noisy, wheezy breathing
- A feeling of tightness in the chest.



What Causes Asthma?

We cannot pinpoint exactly what causes asthma, but it is known to run in families. It may be associated with childhood eczema or hay fever and it can be triggered by certain factors i.e allergic or non-allergic. Some of these are easy to identify

Allergic factors:-dust, pollen, mould, animal hair and certain foods/drinks.

Non-allergic factors:- exertion - sport activities, smoky atmospheres, cold and damp, chest colds and infections.

At what Age does Asthma affect you ?

Of the estimated 250,000 people with asthma in Ireland, about three-quarters develop it in childhood, or during their teenage years. However, a quarter of patients do not experience their first asthmatic attack until after the age of 35 (this is called adult onset or late onset asthma). Asthma is the commonest long-term illness in children - estimated that 1 in 7 children may develop asthma and 1 in 20 adults.

How can asthma be treated ?

The most common forms of medication are aerosol inhalers, powder inhalers, syrup, tablet and nebuliser.

They fall into two groups:- Preventers and Relievers. Preventers must be taken regularly, because their aim is to prevent wheezing or breathlessness. They are not meant to give rapid relief during an asthmatic attack. Relievers do give rapid relief of wheeze, therefore used in an attack.

Normally the person will be visibly better within five minutes of using the reliever inhaler. If not this is a severe attack which needs urgent medical attention.

How can I learn more about asthma ?

- ♦ By phoning Asthma Line on 1850-445464, where you can get recorded asthma information 24 hours a day. You may also phone an asthma specialist nurse on Thursdays between 2 and 5.30pm on 01-8788122.
- ♦ By becoming a member of the Asthma Society of Ireland ;-tel- 01-8788511.

NB There also exists a condition known as **Occupational asthma**. This is caused by dusts or chemicals breathed in from the workplace air.

The substances causing allergies or occupational asthma are called **respiratory sensitisers**. They are found in a large range of areas, particularly those using:- **electronic soldering flux; flour/grain; isocyanates; laboratory animals; wood dusts; glues/resins, etc**

Another concern with using Respiratory sensitizers is that they may also trigger asthmatic attacks in diagnosed asthmatic's. Therefore appropriate safety measures must be taken, including use of PPE and Information and training.

For further info please contact:- **The Student Health Centre.**
Room 114. Open 9am to 9pm Mon to Fri.
And 9am to 1pm Sat. No appt. necessary.