



Controlling Exercise Induced Asthma

Did you know that many people who have asthma also have exercise induced asthma?¹ That means that when they exercise, take the stairs, or play sports, their asthma becomes worse¹. Are you one of those people?

If you have shortness of breath when exercising, or if you have wheezing, chest tightness, chest pain, or cough, you should check with your doctor right away¹. Exercise induced asthma is able to be controlled with the right treatment plan².

In order to diagnose exercise induced asthma, your doctor may want to do a lung function test called a "PFT" or "spirometry" test¹. Your doctor will have you breathe into a machine and measure how much air goes in and out of your lungs before and after exercise. But sometimes the doctor can make the diagnosis based on your symptoms alone¹.

If you have exercise induced asthma, your doctor may give you new medications or special instructions for the medications you already have.² He or she may tell you to take your rescue inhaler a few minutes before activity.² Your doctor may also give you a maintenance medication that will help to prevent exercise induced asthma symptoms.²

Exercise induced asthma can be caused by many things. If you are exercising outside in the winter, the cold air you are breathing may be triggering your asthma symptoms.¹ Wear a scarf over your mouth and nose to warm the air as you breathe.¹

Another cause of exercise induced asthma is the activity itself. You may be exercising too hard or too fast. Make sure you slowly work your way up to a maximum activity level by doing a warm up before exercising.¹ End your exercise with a "cool down" period where you slowly stop the activity.¹ This gives your lungs more time to adjust to the exercises you are doing.

It is very important to stay active when you have asthma². Your asthma should not prevent you from doing your usual activities and exercise². Some Olympic athletes have asthma, and with the right medication they are not only able to play sports, but they can become the best in the world! Asthmatics can participate in most sports and exercise programs, but make sure you check with your doctor to be sure the activity you choose is appropriate for you¹. Stay active, stay healthy, and have a great summer!

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¹<http://www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips/exerciseinducedasthma.stm>

²<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthsumm.pdf>