

# Asthma, Weight & Exercise

Asthma triggers cause symptoms such as wheezing, shortness of breath that does not go away with rest, chest tightness and coughing, which comes and go.

Asthma flare-ups, or attacks, can be mild to severe, and can be life-threatening even in people with “mild” asthma. Common asthma triggers are:



Flare-ups are more common and worse when asthma is not well controlled. Asthma is best controlled by avoiding triggers and taking medications - most medications need to be taken daily.

## HOW DOES EXCESS WEIGHT AFFECT ASTHMA?

- Having extra body fat adds weight to the chest and belly and stops the free flow of air into the lungs.
- Not being able to take deep breaths is linked with being overweight and not having an active lifestyle may also lead to airway narrowing.
- Excess weight can make the amount of blood going to the airways less and even change how well a patient responds to asthma medication.
- Overweight children are often unable to breathe in as much air, while having more airway twitchiness, making them more likely to start having asthma symptoms than children who are a healthy weight.
- People with asthma are more likely to be overweight than people who do not have asthma.

## WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a chronic (long-term), serious disease that causes the airways in the lungs to be twitchy or sensitive. Triggers (things that make asthma worse) make the airways:

- swell
- squeeze
- fill with mucus

Asthma is very common in children, but can start at any age.

## How Can Exercise Help Asthma?



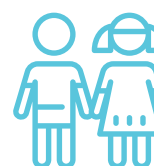
**Make a plan with your doctor**



**Everyone with asthma should be able to be active**



**Being active can improve lung strength and health**



**Children that run and play are less likely to become overweight**