

Glossary

acid reflux

A disease in which acid from the stomach flows into the throat, causing heartburn. Acid reflux can trigger asthma. Acid reflux stands for “gastroesophageal reflux.”

airways

The tubes inside the lungs.

allergy

A disease in which the body has a bad reaction to something you breathe, touch or eat.

allergy skin test

A test used to diagnose an allergy.

antibiotics

Medicines used to treat an infection caused by bacteria.

anticholinergics

A quick-relief medicine used to open the airways of the lungs.

asthma

A disease in which the airways of the lungs become puffy and swollen, squeezed by the muscles around them, and blocked by mucus.

asthma attack

A flare-up of asthma symptoms in which it is very hard to breathe.

beta2-agonist

A medicine used to open the airways of the lungs. It may be short-acting or long-acting. Note: never use a long-acting beta2-agonist in an asthma attack.

breathing test

A test that measures the amount of air breathed in and out of the lungs. A doctor may use a breathing test to determine if you have asthma.

board certified allergist

A doctor who has special training in asthma and allergies and has passed a certification exam.

CFCs

A chemical used to spray the medicine out of an inhaler. CFC stands for “chlorofluorocarbon.”

chronic disease

A disease that can be controlled but not cured.

early warning signs

Body changes that reveal when asthma may be getting worse. Some warning signs appear hours or days before an asthma attack, and some appear as an attack is coming on.

exercise-induced asthma

Asthma that becomes worse through exercise.

HFAs

A chemical used to spray the medicine out of an inhaler. HFA stands for hydrofluoroalkane.

inhaler

A hand-held device that sends medicine directly to the airways of the lungs.

irritants

Things that are breathed in that bother the nose, throat or airways.

leukotriene modifiers

A new type of long-term control medicine.

long-acting medicine

A medicine whose effects last for several hours.

long-term control medicine

A medicine taken every day to control asthma.

mucus

A thick fluid found in the airways.

nasal wash

A treatment to rinse mucus and bacteria out of the nose and sinuses.

nebulizer

A machine that mixes medicine with a mist that the user can breathe directly into the lungs.



peak flow meter

A small, hand-held device that measures how well air is moving in and out of the lungs.

personal best number

The number on a peak flow meter that indicates if the user is breathing easily. This number is determined by using a meter over a two to three week period when asthma is stable. The highest number the user achieves in this period is the personal best.

pediatric allergist

A doctor who is an expert in treating children with asthma and allergies.

pediatrician

A doctor who is an expert in treating children.

pediatric pulmonologist

A doctor who is an expert in treating children with lung problems.

quick-relief medicine

A medicine that takes effect right away to help breathing difficulties. It is used to help reduce asthma symptoms or an asthma attack.

short-acting medicine

A medicine whose effects last for just a few hours.

side effect

An unwanted result of a medicine.

sinuses

Air pockets inside the head.

sinusitis

A disease in which the sinuses are swollen.

spacer

A device that attaches to an inhaler to help send medicine directly to the airways of the lungs.

steroid

A kind of medicine that is very effective but has strong side effects.



symptom

A sign of disease.

theophylline

A type of long-term control medicine that opens the airways by relaxing the tight muscles around the airways. It may also decrease swelling in the airways.

vaccine

A shot that protects the body from a specific disease.

wheeze

To make a whistling sound in the chest because air is moving through tight airways.