Asthma

What is asthma?

Asthma is an inflammation and spasm of the airway triggered by an allergic reaction to dust pollen, animal dander and insects, cigarette smoke, chemicals etc. Exercise and cold air can also be causative in aggravating asthma. Asthma may develop anytime during life. Some people may outgrow symptoms of asthma, or symptoms may recur later in life.

Prevention

• Know and avoid your triggers that irritate your airways  
• Avoid cold air and air pollution, especially when exercising  
• Medications such as cold remedies, aspirin, and ibuprofen can trigger asthma. Acetaminophen may be the over the counter medication of choice.  
• Practice relaxation techniques  
• Avoid dusty environments. Humidifying air may be helpful  
• Drink adequate fluids to thin airway mucous membranes

When to call Health Professionals (call 911)

• A severe breathing attack  
• Inhalant medications are not working after 20 minutes of an attack  
• If heart problems such as chest pain and shortness of breath occur with an attack  
• Coughing up bloody or yellow mucous  
• If you experience more frequent use of medications and asthma is not being controlled