



May

Take Control



Controlling Asthma “Triggers”

Controlling asthma triggers such as dust mites, mold, pets, and tobacco smoke is key to disease treatment. There is no actual way to prevent asthma but lowering the presence of triggers will reduce its onset. Here are some tips on how to better contain some triggers that may be present in your home:

- Cover pillows, mattresses and box springs with allergen-proof, zippered covers.
- Wash bedding, including covers, in hot water weekly.
- Have pets groomed regularly to reduce dander.
- Use a multi-layer, allergen-proof vacuum bag when sweeping and do not sweep when a person with asthma is in the room. Use products that eliminate dust mites from carpeting.
- Regularly change filters on heaters and air conditioners.
- Do not smoke in the house or car.
- Use a dehumidifier to reduce dampness.
- Cover air ducts with filters or cheesecloth and replace when dirty.
- Dust surfaces regularly. Don't forget hard-to-reach places such as tops of ceiling fans, ledges and book shelves.
- Use the air conditioner to reduce airborne pollen from trees, grasses and weeds that often find their way indoors. Or keep your windows closed during pollen season.

Source WebMd.com

May is:

Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month
National Osteoporosis Awareness Prevention Month
Correct Posture Month

Asthma: Taking Your Breath Away

Asthma affects 22 million Americans, 6 million under the age of 18, according to WebMd.com. Increasingly diagnosed among children, it is the leading cause of school absenteeism. When triggered, asthma inflames the bronchial tubes, causing swelling and narrowing of the airways. The result is shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing and chest tightness.

Asthma can occur at any age, in any body. Typically, it happens to children by age 5 and in adults in their 30s. While there is no specific medical reason as to why certain people get the disease, individuals with parents who have asthma are more inclined to get it than those that do not have a family history. More specifically, you have a 6% chance of developing asthma if neither parent has the condition, a 30% chance if one parent has it and a 70% occurrence if both parents have it. People with allergies are also more likely to get asthma. In fact, 80% of children and 50% of adults with asthma also have allergies, according to Medicinenet.com.

People with asthma have airways that are super-sensitive to certain “triggers” such as dust mites, pollens, pet dander, strong fumes or odors as well as smoke from cigarettes or even charcoal grills. Cold air and dry wind can also initiate asthma in

addition to colds, flu and sinus infections. Vigorous exercise and stress are also triggers.

Asthma triggers and reaction severity vary by person. In some, symptoms can be annoying, while in others they could be life-threatening if not treated promptly. An asthma attack can be so severe that it can result in death.

While there is no cure for asthma, it can be controlled with medical care. Even those with mild asthma should seek medical advice to improve quality of life. Treatment varies by individual and typically includes the development of a personalized management plan that takes into account the triggers that bring on asthma, severity of reactions, age, lifestyle, medical conditions and success of prior therapies. A personalized management plan may include:

- Identification of asthma triggers and measures to avoid them
- Long-term medications to treat symptoms in individuals who have frequent flare ups
- Inhaler to relive sudden symptoms
- Plan on how to deal with asthma attacks

When to Seek Emergency Care

As asthma conditions change over time and new treatments become available, management plans should be periodically reviewed and adjusted. Individuals who

Osteoporosis Targets Women in Larger Numbers than Men

Did you know that women are at a significantly higher risk for developing osteoporosis than men? Of the estimated 10 million people aged 50 and over in the United States who have osteoporosis, 80 percent of them are women, according to National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF). Another 34 million individuals – both men and women - are estimated to have low bone mass, putting them at increased risk for getting osteoporosis.

A disease characterized by low bone mass and structural deterioration of bone tissue, osteoporosis weakens the bone, making it more susceptible to fractures from even minor falls. Over 1.5 million fractures are caused by osteoporosis in the U.S. annually, cites the NOF. Repeated spine fractures can result in acute and chronic back pain, loss of height and spine curvature.

Who's At Risk?

Certain factors put people at higher risk in developing osteoporosis than others, notes the NOF. These include:

- **Gender:** Women lose bone mass more quickly than men as they age. Approximately 1 in 2 women and 1 in 4 men over age 50 will have an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime.
- **Age:** After age 40, there is a decrease in the amount of bone formed that can lead to bone loss. The rate of bone loss accelerates as we age, especially in women.

- **Menopause:** Because the ovaries produce less estrogen, there is less bone formation and greater bone loss. In fact, women lose up to 20 percent of their bone mass in the 5 to 7 years after menopause. A hysterectomy that included removal of both ovaries also puts women at higher risk.
- **Family history** of osteoporosis or broken bones, especially if your mother had osteoporosis.
- **Smoking** lowers estrogen levels in the blood, doubling the risk of developing osteoporosis.
- **Underweight women** are more inclined to get osteoporosis because they produce less estrogen.
- **Lack of exercise**, especially the absence of weight-bearing activities, can make the bones less dense and weaker. Exercise stimulates the bone cells to produce stronger bone.
- **Diets low in calcium or vitamin D**, especially during the early growing years, lead to less bone formation.
- **Medications:** Cortisone-type drugs used for asthma, lung disease and arthritis, especially used in high doses or taken for more than three months, can increase the risk of developing osteoporosis.

Screenings Detect Osteoporosis

A bone mineral density (BMD) test, often referred to as a DXA or DEXA (dual x-ray

absorptiometry) scan is a painless procedure that uses very low levels of radiation to measure bone density in various sites of the body such as the hips and spine. Studies suggest that only 12 percent of people with osteoporosis have had a BMD screening. After the age of 50, this screening may be covered as part of preventive health care benefits by certain medical plans.

Even if detected, the best way to address osteoporosis is to reverse the risk factors that you can control. Stop smoking, start exercising and begin lifting a manageable amount of weights and add calcium and vitamin D to your diet. Ensure children maintain a diet that supports good bone development as bones build fastest between the ages of 9 and 16 with peak bone mass reached in the mid 20's.

For more information, visit the National Osteoporosis Foundation at www.nof.org/aboutosteoporosis.

Source: National Osteoporosis Foundation



Asthma (continued from page 1)

don't manage asthma are at higher risk of future and more severe asthma attacks.

Serious asthma attacks sometimes warrant emergency care. If symptoms don't improve with prescribed home treatment, seek emergency medical care for the following conditions:

- Severe breathlessness or wheezing, especially at night or in the early morning
- Inability to speak more than short phrases due to shortness of breath
- Strain in chest muscles to breathe
- Low peak flow readings when you use a peak flow meter

The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology offers an online test at www.acaai.org/allergist/tools/asthma-quizes/Pages/asthma-life-quality-test.aspx to quantify your quality of life with asthma. In addition to evaluating your condition, you can also use these questions as a starting point of discussion when visiting your doctor or allergist. There is also a kid's asthma check for ages 1 – 8 and 8 – 14 on this site.

Springtime Recipe

This heart-healthy sauce uses lemon juice, herbs, and a small amount of oil. Recipe from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov).

Vegetables With a Touch of Lemon (6 servings)

- 1/2 small head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 2 cups broccoli, cut into florets
- 2 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 tsp fresh parsley, chopped



Directions

1. Steam broccoli and cauliflower until tender (about 10 minutes).
2. In a small saucepan, mix the lemon juice, oil, and garlic, and cook over low heat for 2 or 3 minutes.
3. Put the vegetables in a serving dish. Pour the lemon sauce over the vegetables. Garnish with parsley.

Serving Size: 1/2 cup. Per serving: 22 calories; 2g total fat; less than 1g saturated fat; 0mg cholesterol; 7mg sodium; 10mg calcium; less than 1mg iron.