

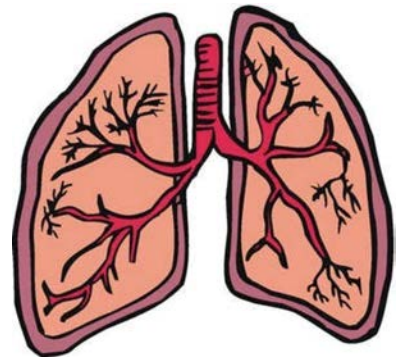
Module 5: Staying Healthy With Asthma

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General Facts to Staying Healthy

- The fitter you are, the better your lungs work.
- The better your lungs work, the fewer problems you should have with your asthma.
- The fewer problems you have with your asthma, the better you'll feel and the more you'll be able to do.
- There are lots of ways to get exercise. Find one that you like, and work with your doctor or healthcare provider to keep asthma under control.
- Having an Asthma Action Plan takes all the mystery out of treating your asthma. Make sure your coaches have a copy, and know what to do if you need help.



Sports, Other Activities, and Asthma

If exercise or physical activity makes your asthma get worse, then you must change the way you exercise. It is very important to follow the instructions in your asthma plan to reduce the chance of problems. If you are exercising while you are around the triggers that make your asthma worse, then you can really have a serious problem. Watch for signs that your asthma is getting worse and change what you are doing and where you are as soon as possible.



Exercise-Induced Bronchoconstriction (EIB)

Some people have asthma that only happens when they exercise. This is called exercise-induced bronchoconstriction (EIB). Just like other asthma triggers, if exercise causes an attack for you, it's because your airways are getting smaller and tightening. Fast, hard breathing, coughing, wheezing and a tight chest are signs of an asthma attack. An asthma attack can be very serious, even life-threatening. Be sure to take **quick relief or rescue medicine** if this happens.

Symptoms of EIB can be made much worse with seasonal allergies. The trouble with breathing usually starts during exercise or within 5 to 10 minutes after exercise. It may last as long as 30 minutes. If this happens to you, you can still play sports and do other activities, you just have to have the right medicine from your doctor.



Tips for Exercising with Asthma

If you want to exercise and you have asthma, try these tips. Before being active, take time to do some warm-up exercises to let your breathing adjust to the increased need for air. Avoid being around your triggers while you are exercising. In cold weather, cover your mouth and nose with a scarf to help warm the air before you breathe it in. Follow your doctor's instructions about using asthma medicine before or after you are very active.



Smoking and Asthma

Smoking and breathing in other people's smoke is bad for everyone. It's **really** bad if you have asthma!

Try to stay away from cigarette smoke and definitely don't smoke yourself.

- Cigarette smoke will damage your airways and make your asthma worse.
- Smoke can cause permanent damage to your lungs.
- It can also make it harder to do exercise.
- Stay away from people who are smoking and from places where people have been smoking.



Dealing with People Who Smoke Around You

It's great you don't smoke, don't ever start! Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that you're safe. Breathing in other people's smoke can be just as harmful to people with asthma as smoking yourself. It can be really tough if someone in your family or your friends smoke. But if you have asthma, it's very important to speak up and let people know their smoke can, or is, causing you problems.



Here are some ideas from the [Asthma Initiative of Michigan](#) to help you deal with people smoking when you're around:

- Tell them how you feel.
- Ask them not to smoke when you're in their car, or while you're eating together.
- Tell them how their smoking makes your asthma worse – they may not even know what they're doing to you.
- Ask them to give up smoking, but remember that it is an addiction and this can be very hard. Some kids have found that it works to ask their parents to quit smoking for their birthday present.
- If they can't give up, ask them to smoke outside instead.
- If that isn't possible either, make sure you have a place, like your bedroom that is kept smoke-free.

Great job! You're one step closer to finishing the CHECK Asthma Online Program. Hopefully you now know more about how to stay healthy.

Now you can move onto the next topic.

