

Exercise and Asthma

Is it Safe to Exercise if I Have Asthma? One of the goals of asthma treatment is to help you maintain a normal and healthy lifestyle, which includes exercise and other physical activities. Following your asthma action plan by taking medications as prescribed by your doctor, avoiding triggers and monitoring your symptoms and lung function will help you achieve this goal.

If asthma symptoms prevent you from participating fully in activities, talk to your asthma doctor. A small change in your asthma action plan may be all that is needed to provide asthma relief during exercise or activity. What Types of Exercise Are Best for People With Asthma? Activities that involve short, intermittent periods of exertion such as volleyball, gymnastics, baseball and wrestling are generally well tolerated by people with symptoms of asthma. Activities that involve long periods of exertion, such as soccer, distance running, basketball, and field hockey, may be less well tolerated. Also less well tolerated are cold weather sports such as ice hockey, cross-country skiing, and ice-skating. However, many people with asthma are able to fully participate in these activities. Swimming, which is a strong endurance sport, is generally well tolerated by many people with asthma because it is usually performed in a warm, moist air environment. It is also an excellent activity for maintaining physical fitness. Other beneficial activities for people with asthma include both outdoor and indoor biking, aerobics, walking, or running on a treadmill. How Much Exercise Should I Get? Generally, exercise should be performed 4-5 times per week for at least 30 minutes. Talk to your doctor to find out how much exercise you should get What Should I Do to Control My Asthma When I Exercise?

- Always use your pre-exercise asthma inhalers (inhaled bronchodilators) before beginning exercise
- Perform warm-up exercises and maintain an appropriate cool-down period after exercise
- If the weather is cold, exercise indoors or wear a mask or scarf over your nose and mouth
- If you have allergic asthma, avoid exercising outdoors when pollen counts are high and when there is high air pollution
- Restrict exercise when you have a viral infection, like a cold
- Exercise at a level that is appropriate for you

Maintaining an active lifestyle is important for both physical and mental health. Remember: asthma is not a reason to avoid exercise. With proper asthma diagnosis and the most effective asthma treatment, you should be able to enjoy the benefits of an exercise program without experiencing asthma symptoms. If you have any questions, talk to your doctor. What Do I Do If I Have an Asthma Attack While Exercising? If you begin to experience asthma symptoms during exercise, stop and repeat your pre-exercise inhaled medication (quick relief medication like albuterol). If your symptoms completely go away, you may restart the exercise. If your symptoms return, stop the activity, repeat your quick relief medication and call your health care provider for further advice.