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. Taking your asthma medications as prescribed, 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, cold-weather sports, such as ice hockey, cross-country skiing, and ice-skating, may pose challenges. However, many people with asthma are able to participate fully in these activities.

Swimming, which is a strong endurance sport, is generally well tolerated by many people with asthma, because it is usually performed while breathing warm, moist air. It is also an excellent activity for maintaining physical fitness.

Other beneficial activities for people with asthma may include both outdoor and indoor biking, aerobics, walking, and running on a treadmill.

What Should I Do to Control My Asthma When I Exercise?

Before starting an exercise program, talk to your doctor. He will help you decide what activities are best for you. He will develop an action plan that will tell you what to do before exercise and if you have symptoms during exercise.

- Always use your pre-exercise asthma medicine if directed by your asthma action plan, 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 or air pollution counts are high.
- 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 diagnosis and the most effective 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 follow the instructions in your asthma action plan. Keep your rescue inhaler handy, and use it as directed as soon as you have symptoms. If your symptoms are not getting better, call for emergency medical assistance.

Source: https://www.webmd.com/asthma/guide/exercising-asthma#1 Reviewed by Nayana Ambardekar, MD on June 13, 2018

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