

WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a long-term condition that affects your airways.

It manifests itself with symptoms such as coughing, wheezing and breathlessness.

Sufferers may undergo an attack when they come into contact with one of their triggers such as cold, catching a cold or flu or by contact with an irritant such as dust mites or mould or dampness.

Who is at Risk?

According to Asthma UK, 5.4 million of the UK population currently is receiving treatment. This equates to around 1 in every 12 adults, and 1 in every 11 children. Asthma affects boys more than girls, but in adult life, the situation is reversed with women suffering more than men.

Asthma tends to run in families, especially when there is a history of smoking or allergies.

What are the Symptoms?

It is important to note that not everyone will have the same symptoms or 'triggers'.

Typically, the sufferer may experience one or more of the following: -

1. Chest Tightness
2. Wheezing
3. Coughing

When this happens an asthma attack may happen, and it is important that urgent medical attention is given. Cold weather can sometimes trigger asthma symptoms, so it is important that the sufferer keeps warm.

When a symptom manifests itself, the patient should use their preventer inhaler which should always be carried. If after using the preventer, the asthma attack does not diminish, professional medical assistance should be summoned.

What support is out there?

National Support: Asthma UK – the charity that works to fund research into the causes of asthma and campaigns to improve the quality of care that people with asthma receive, also provides a wealth of useful free information via its website at <https://www.asthma.org.uk>

Local level support: Your local GP surgery may be able to put you in touch with a local asthma support group. Forwarding thinking GP Practices may, from time-to-time, run local patient education sessions. Contact your practice to establish if they, in partnership with other practices locally, undertake this.

The British Lung Federation have a number of local Breathe Easy Support Groups which provide support and hold meetings to enable sufferers to meet with others in a similar situation. They run a number of activities and details of your nearest facility can be found by entering your postcode at

https://www.blf.org.uk/support-for-you/breathe-easy?utm_source=%28direct%29&utm_medium=print

It can sometimes help the sufferer if they are prepared to have a conversation about their condition and the Shed environment is an ideal place for this to take place as long as it is a non-threatening, and non-judgemental.

Other Articles of Interest and Research Papers

There are several research papers mainly directed towards the medical profession and if interested, a Google search will reveal a number.

Research into asthma and its causes, is often funded by charity. Asthma UK welcomes groups undertaking fund raising on its behalf either as a one-off event, or as a regular activity. Sheds interested in undertaking fund raising can find resource material at <https://www.asthma.org.uk/support-us/fundraising/>