

## Other languages

This leaflet can be produced in other languages on request. We can also provide the information in other formats including Braille, large print, and audio CD. Please contact us if you require help.

## Compliments and complaints

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a confidential NHS service that provides help, advice and information for patients, families, and carers. We welcome all your feedback about the service.

Contact PALS at:

- **Email:** [pals@mft.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@mft.nhs.uk)
- **Telephone:** 0161 276 8686

## Who provides this service?

The Children's Asthma Service is provided by Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO). MLCO is the organisation that provides NHS community health and adult social care services in the city.

**Find out more about MLCO at**  
**[www.manchesterlco.org](http://www.manchesterlco.org)**

## Contacting us

### Children's Asthma Nursing Service

Longsight Health Centre  
Stockport Road  
Longsight  
Manchester  
M13 0RR

**Telephone:** 0161 529 6638

**Our service is open Monday to Friday,  
from 8:00am to 6:00pm (excluding  
Bank Holidays).**

For more information on how we can help, as well as a range of support materials, please visit our service page on the MLCO website:

[www.manchesterlco.org/childrens-asthma-service](http://www.manchesterlco.org/childrens-asthma-service)

## Other useful contacts

### Asthma UK Adviceline

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** [www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)

### Allergy UK

- **Telephone:** 0300 222 5800
- **Website:** [www.asthmaandlung.org.uk](http://www.asthmaandlung.org.uk)

# A guide to asthma

## Patient and carer information

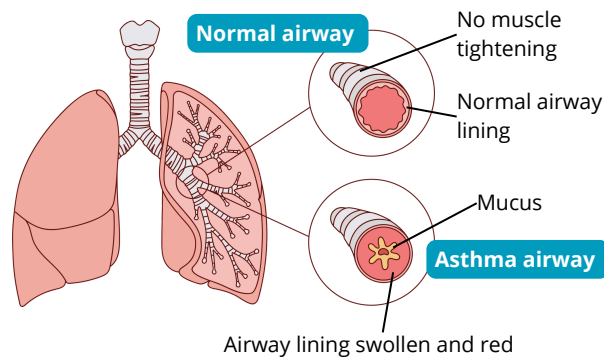
### Children's Asthma Service



## What is asthma?

**Asthma** is a common condition that affects the airways – the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs. This makes it harder to **breathe**.

The muscle around the airway tightens, making it narrower. The lining of the airway becomes red and sore. It swells and produces sticky mucus.



*An illustration of normal and asthmatic airways*

If you have asthma, you may:

- Cough – particularly at night and after exercise
- Wheeze – a whistling noise
- Get short of breath
- Have a tight feeling in your chest

Everyone's asthma is different. You may have some or all of these symptoms from time to time. Some people experience symptoms when they get a cold. Others are worse at night or first thing in the morning. But most importantly, you shouldn't have to put up with symptoms!

Asthma treatments should help you gain full control of the condition. There are two main kinds of treatments:

- **Preventers** – help to control the swelling in the airways and reduce the chance of symptoms. Preventer treatments need to be taken every day, even when you are well.
- **Relievers** – help to open up the airways when they tighten, relieving the symptoms.

Most asthma treatments are inhaled (breathed in), as this is the most effective way of taking them. Even babies can inhale asthma treatments through a spacer, rather than using syrups.

## Diagnosing asthma

Diagnosing asthma can be difficult, especially in young children, because:

- Many children will wheeze at some point during their first five years, particularly if they have a cold.
- It is not easy to measure how well the lungs are working in children.

That said, observing the pattern of symptoms over time will help your nurse or doctor determine if your child has asthma. You may also need to keep a diary.

## Asthma facts

- Asthma is common - 1 in 11 children in the UK have asthma.
- Asthma can start at any age.
- The exact cause of asthma is not known. But the tendency to develop allergies, including asthma, often runs in families.
- Asthma is related to other allergic conditions, such as eczema and hay fever.
- Passive smoking increases the likelihood of a child developing asthma.