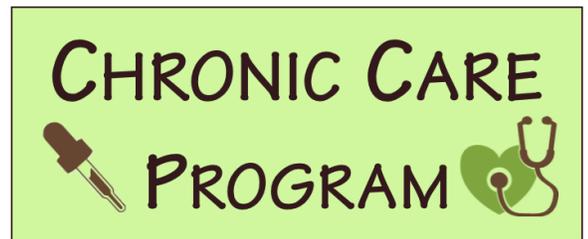


# ASTHMA

at a glance



## What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that inflames and narrows airways. The airways are tubes that carry air into and out of your lungs. People who have asthma have inflamed airways, which become swollen and very sensitive. These airways tend to react strongly to certain inhaled substances, which cause the muscles around them to tighten, making it harder to breathe.

## Complications and Symptoms

Asthma causes recurring periods of wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe), chest tightness, shortness of breath, and coughing. The coughing often occurs at night or early in the morning.

Not all people who have asthma have these symptoms. The types of asthma symptoms you have, how often they occur, and how severe they are may vary over time. Sometimes your symptoms may just annoy you. Other times, they may be troublesome enough to limit your daily routine.

## Risk Factors

Asthma affects people of all ages, but it most often starts during childhood. Young children who often wheeze and have respiratory infections—as well as certain other risk factors—are at highest risk of developing asthma that continues beyond 6 years of age. The other risk factors include having allergies, eczema (an allergic skin condition), or parents who have asthma.

Many things can trigger or worsen asthma symptoms. These triggers may include:

- Allergens from dust, animal fur, cockroaches, mold, and pollens from trees, grasses, and flowers
- Irritants such as cigarette smoke, air pollution, chemicals or dust in the workplace
- Medicines such as aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs and beta-blockers
- Viral upper respiratory infections, such as colds
- Physical activity, including exercise

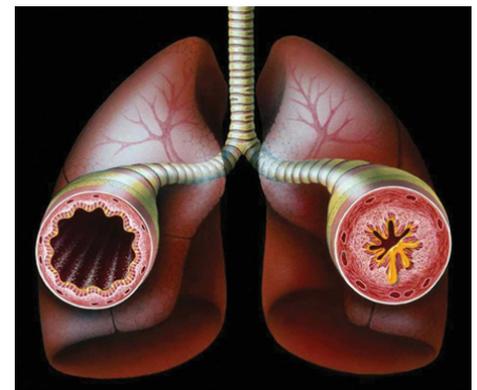
## Prevention and Management

Asthma is a long-term disease with no cure, but action can be taken to control your asthma. This includes:

- avoiding things that can worsen your asthma, such as the asthma triggers listed above. However, one trigger you should not avoid is physical activity. Physical activity is an important part of a healthy lifestyle.
- tracking your asthma symptoms in a diary
- taking asthma medicines, which can include long-term control medicines

The information on this side of the handout comes from the National Institutes of Health.

Visit [www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov) to learn more about asthma.



*On the left is an example of a normal airway. On the right is an example of an airway in a person with asthma. Asthma causes airways to swell and make mucus.*

# ITHACA FREE CLINIC

how we can help

## Chronic Care Program

Joining the Chronic Care Program gives you access to all of the services offered at the Ithaca Free Clinic. Patients are seen by appointment, instead of waiting at the walk-in clinic. Services include:

- acupuncture
- chiropractic
- massage therapy
- occupational therapy
- counseling
- herbal medicine
- dietician
- energy work
- reiki
- health insurance enroll-

Here are some examples of how these services can help patients with asthma.

### Acupuncture

Acupuncture is a form of alternative medicine where thin needles are inserted into the body. Although it is often known for treating pain, acupuncture can treat or alleviate various conditions.

Acupuncture can have immediate results when used to treat asthma. It was one of the first diseases designated by the World Health Organization as treatable with acupuncture. In most cases, acupuncture helps people with asthma feel better.

### Herbal Medicine

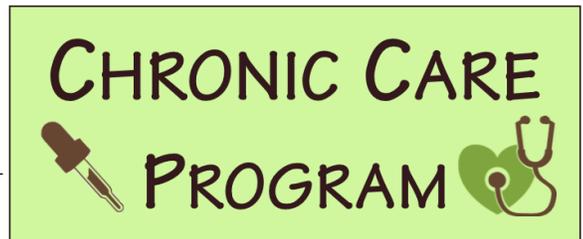
Herbal medicine uses plants for their therapeutic properties. Herbal medicines can be taken in various forms, including as teas or tinctures.

Herbalists assess symptoms; take a history including medications and other relevant information; discuss symptoms that may or may not be associated with asthma; look at how and when asthma is triggered and possible ways to avoid triggers; discuss medical treatments or further tests from other conventional or holistic practitioners, and prepare herbal medicines that:

1. Decrease airway resistance and help breathing
2. Decrease respiratory inflammation
3. Support lung

function

4. Help other health-care problems and overall health. Herbalists continue to see patients regularly and adjust herbal protocols as needed.



The Ithaca Free Clinic offers the Chronic Care Program, an integrative project that:

- helps patients with chronic diseases and conditions live with potential long-term health consequences
- makes each patient a part of a “care team” with multiple providers and health care professionals to help set and maintain the patient’s health care plan
- helps patients set goals and also provides support to reach those goals
- works with each patient to become and stay healthy!

**To join the Chronic Care Program,**  
call (607) 330-1254  
or email [ChronicCare@IthacaHealth.org](mailto:ChronicCare@IthacaHealth.org).

Learn more about the Ithaca Free Clinic at:  
**[IthacaHealth.org](http://IthacaHealth.org)**

We are located at 521 West Seneca Street,  
Ithaca, New York.



*The Ithaca Free Clinic offers herbal medicine and acupuncture services for various conditions, including asthma.*