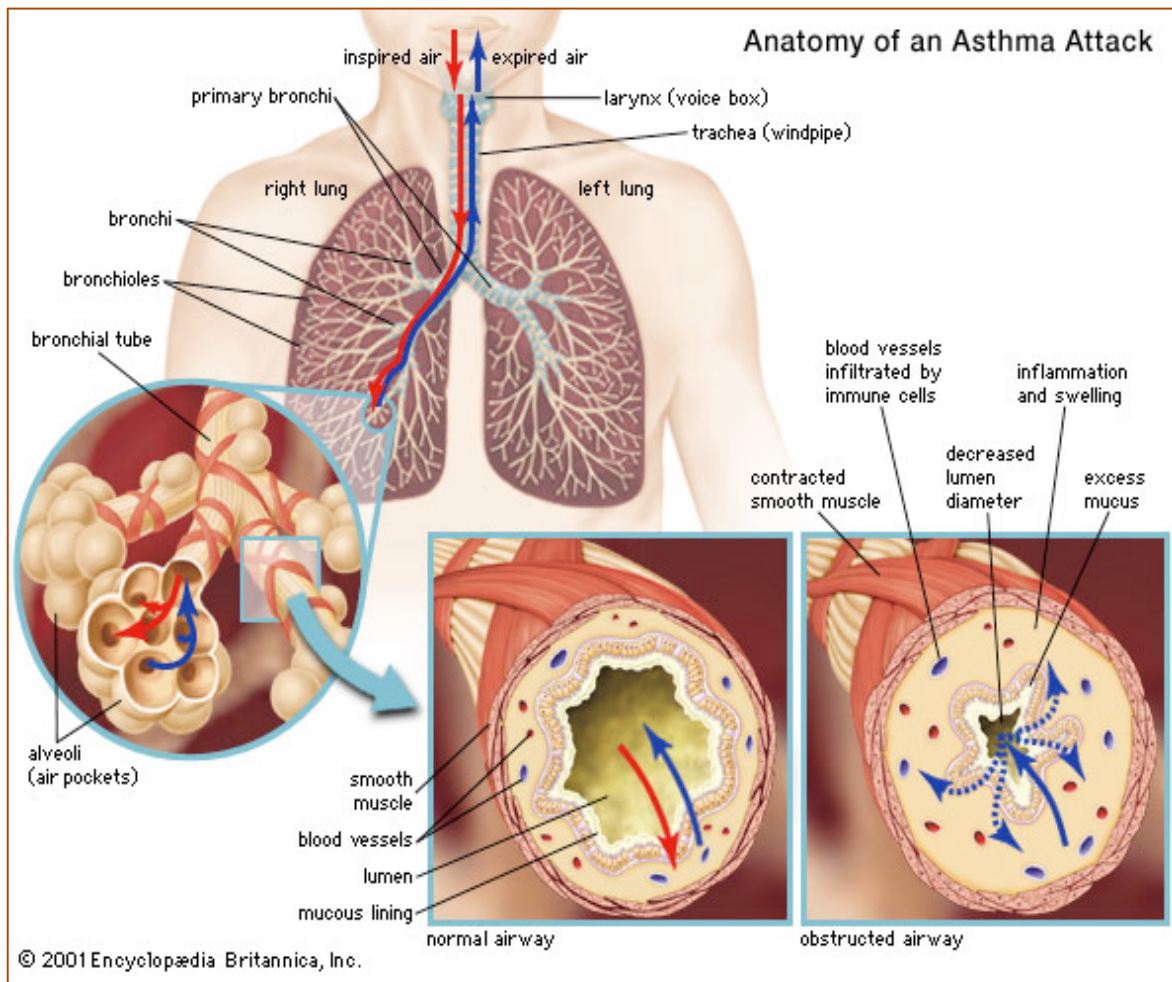


Understanding Asthma

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic disease—one that cannot be cured. When you have asthma, the airways in your lungs are very sensitive and can become inflamed and swollen. In addition, certain triggers can cause airway muscles to squeeze; this is called bronchoconstriction. The airway also can produce excess mucus.



Symptoms of asthma episodes:

- Chest tightness
- Coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing

What triggers asthma episodes?

With asthma, the air passages are overly sensitive, increasing the likelihood of an asthma episode. Substances or conditions called triggers cause airways in the lungs to become inflamed and swollen. Asthma triggers vary from person to person. Below is a list of many common asthma triggers.

Allergens:

- Pollen-microscopic particles released from trees, grasses, or weeds.
- Dust mites-tiny insects that live in house dust.
- Pet dander-skin scales that furry or feathery pets shed.
- Indoor molds-spores from molds form in warm, damp, dark places.

Other asthma triggers:

- Pollution
- Cold air
- Colds and viruses
- Tobacco smoke
- Exercise