

Exercise:

Exercise is important for a healthy body. Exercise improves circulation, builds endurance, improves mood, and helps control weight. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends everyone should exercise most days of the week for 30 minutes. If you are out of shape and over 40 years old you should talk to your doctor before starting an intense exercise program.

Exercise and Asthma:

Asthma should not keep you from exercising. Keep in mind that exercise potentially may cause your asthma to get worse during or right after you have exercised. In most asthmatics and some people without asthma, exercise causes tightening of the muscles around the breathing tubes. The tightening makes the air tubes smaller causing shortness of breath, wheezing, chest pain or tightness, tiredness, or coughing. This is called exercise-induced bronchospasm or EIB. The exact cause of EIB is not known. However, cold or dry air, air pollution, or allergens in the air such as pollen may play a role in the development of EIB.

Prevent Breathing Problems during Exercise:

There are steps you can take to prevent EIB during exercise. EIB can be prevented with medicine. Short-acting bronchodilators like albuterol or levalbuterol are the most common medicine used to treat EIB. These medicines are also called “rescue” or “quick relief medicine.” To prevent EIB, the medicine should be taken 15-20 minutes before exercise. This is called “pre-treatment or pre-medication” and will last about 4 hours. You can take the medicine again if you have breathing problems during or after exercise to “quickly relieve” your symptoms. If you have breathing problems during exercise you should stop your activity until you feel better. Do not try to “breathe through it” or “push yourself” when you are having breathing problems. Talk to your doctor if you need to use the “quick relief” medicine more than once after taking the pre-treatment. Also let your doctor know if the medicine is not helping you.

Warming-up before exercising and cooling-down after exercise can help prevent breathing symptoms. The warm-up should last 5-10 minutes. During the warm-up your muscles will begin to feel warm and you may notice you are starting to sweat. Good warm-up activities include walking, jumping rope, or slowly pedaling a bike. Once you are warmed-up you should stop and rest for 5 minutes before starting to exercise. Begin cooling-down during the last 5-10 minutes of exercise. You can do this by lowering the intensity of your exercise or walking. Once you have finished exercising take a few minutes to stretch your muscles so they will not feel tight.

More Information about Exercise:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/everyone/recommendations/index.htm>