

Allergy & Asthma Specialists, P.C.

Asthma

The physicians of Allergy & Asthma Specialists, P.C. are specialists, board certified in asthma, allergy, clinical immunology as well as pediatrics or internal medicine. With your help, they will work with your primary care physician to control your/your child's asthma. The physicians of this practice are **Robert Anolik, M.D., William Spiegel, M.D., Mark Posner, M.D., Eva Jakabovics, M.D., Stanley Forman, M.D., Gilberto Rodriguez, M.D., Nora Lin, M.D., Matthew Fogg, M.D., Sandhya Desai, M.D., Annie Khuntia, M.D., Shashank Sheth, M.D. and Christine Malloy, M.D.** Also available to see patients is the nurse practitioner, **Elizabeth Bailey, MSN, CRNP.**

Asthma is a complex and ever changing disease. Seasonal and environmental changes, an individual's maturation and factors related to indoor allergen exposure and air quality may interact to trigger asthma. A patient's condition may change rapidly and may be difficult to predict. Education about asthma, watching for asthma triggers, and monitoring peak flow rates (if necessary), should enable one to make changes in the medication regime... within bounds set by your provider. In addition, you will be better able to accurately describe your/your child's status when talking with the doctor or nurse, thus helping our medical personnel make informed decisions concerning your/your child's care.

When you feel there is a need for medical advice, you may call our practice to discuss the problem with our trained nursing staff or a physician. If an office visit is necessary, this can be arranged quickly. When the office is closed, one of our doctors is on call to deal with emergency issues, and can be reached by calling the answering service at **1-610-526-0588.**

Our office locations and phone numbers are:

Blue Bell

470 Sentry Parkway East
Suite 200
610-825-5800
Triage - extension 101

Philadelphia

Two Penn Center
15th & JFK Boulevard
Suite 160
215-563-2933

King of Prussia

The Atrium
234 Mall Boulevard
Suite 170
610-962-1047

Jenkintown

801 Old York Road
Noble Plaza
215-572-7330

Lansdale

2031 North Broad St.
Suite 129
215-362-7050

Doylestown

The Pavilion at
Doylestown Hospital
599 West State Street
Suite 300
215-230-7476

Collegeville

599 Arcola Road
2nd Floor
610-409-6226

Pottstown

5 South Sunnybrook Rd.
Suite 400
610-970-0999

Appointment Scheduling Telephone Number:
1-800-86COUGH (1-800-862-6844), Option 2.

For urgent matters after 5:00 p.m. or on weekends, call the Answering Service at 1-610-526-0588.

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Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease of the airways, characterized by recurrent episodes of wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness and cough. Asthma is a reversible condition characterized by **inflammation**, and an **obstruction to the flow of air** into and out of the lung. In addition, there is **tightening of the bronchial smooth muscles** and **increased mucous**.

Approximately 60 - 80 percent of all pediatric patients who have asthma will develop symptoms before the age of 5. **Coughing is the most common asthma symptom in children.**

The diagnosis of asthma is based on a history of episodic symptoms of airflow obstruction, and reduced lung functions. Lung functions or **Pulmonary Function Tests** measure the amount of air expired. This medical equipment determines the amount of air the lung can hold (lung capacity) and the speed at which air can be exhaled out of the airway. Although many asthmatics have normal lung capacity, their obstructed airways prevent air from being exhaled at the normal rate of speed, thus reducing their airflow.

To limit asthma symptoms, one must understand how to **control environmental triggers**. Allergens and airway irritants such as tobacco smoke, woodstoves, kerosene heaters can all trigger asthma. Pollens, dust mites, cockroaches, pets and molds are all potential allergens. Skin tests are most helpful in identifying an allergy to inhaled substances. The results are available within 20 minutes after the tests are applied.

Periodic exams are necessary to ensure that one's asthma is well controlled. Asthma is generally classified by following the NHLBI (The National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute) guidelines, which are Mild Intermittent, Mild Persistent, Moderate and Severe Persistent. Using a classification makes it easier for your provider to develop a treatment plan.

Asthma Medications

1) The most current recommendation to control persistent asthma is to treat with **anti-inflammatory medications**. These include: inhaled corticosteroids, combination of inhaled corticosteroids and long acting bronchodilator and leukotriene modifiers. **These types of inhalers are typically taken every day and the goal is to prevent the lungs from becoming inflamed.**

2) **Quick relief medications:** short-acting bronchodilators are used to treat acute symptoms and flares. (See list of asthma symptoms on page 5.) **These inhalers are specifically used to open inflamed lung airways quickly.** These include short-acting beta2-agonists and anticholinergics.

- Use of short-acting inhalers on a daily basis or increasing use, indicates the need for additional long-term controller medication or adjustment in therapy.
- They are also used for treatment of acute episodes: bronchodilator every 4 – 6 hours as needed.
- The intensity of treatment is dependent on the severity of the flare.

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- 3) Short courses of **oral steroids** are often used for more severe flares of asthma.
- 4) Anti IgE Therapy
- 5) Immunotherapy

The **goal of asthma management** is to allow patients to live a normal life with minimal flares. We want adults and children to fully participate in normal activities of living, physical education and sports. A **written asthma management** will include your daily maintenance plan and instructions on how and when to increase medications for flares. Please keep this in a prime area of your home, so that you may refer to it when asthma symptoms increase.

Symptoms of an Asthma Flare / When to call the office.

Start your action plan if you/or your child experience wheezing, increased nocturnal cough or increased mucous. Asthma flares are often triggered by viral or bacterial infections.

Call your primary doctor or our office if you/your child has any of the following signs or is unresponsive to the action plan:

1. Cough, shortness of breath, or rapid breathing
2. Chest pain or inability to lie flat
3. It's hard to talk
4. Ribs and neck muscles show when breathing
5. Facial appearance: pale or dusky in color
6. Mood changes: extreme fatigue
7. Rescue medications are not working

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