

Are my child's symptoms due to asthma?

Asthma is a common chest condition and more than one in ten children suffer from it in UK.

What are the symptoms of asthma?

Noisy breathing, like a whistle while breathing out, is called 'wheeze'. Wheeze is the most common symptom of asthma. If your child gets wheezing symptoms frequently it may be indicative of asthma.

As well as wheeze, your child may get feelings of:

- shortness of breath
- a feeling of chest tightness
- a dry cough although a dry cough without wheeze is rarely due to asthma.

When is my child likely to get asthma symptoms?

There are 2 main times when you may notice your child's asthma symptoms:

1. Day to day symptoms
These are symptoms your child gets most days, but are especially obvious typically
 - In the night
 - First thing in the morning
 - During exercise or exertion
2. 'Attacks'
These are symptoms your child gets every so often. They are usually more severe than the day to day symptoms. Asthma attacks can happen suddenly or gradually over a few days. Attacks can be triggered by something like:
 - A cold virus
 - An allergy
 - Cigarette smoke
 - Heavy exercise
 - Feeling upset

Are there other conditions that people with asthma commonly have?

People with asthma often also suffer from other allergy symptoms like:

- Hay fever
- Eczema
- Allergies
- Asthma also often runs in families

What Symptoms are probably not asthma?

Wheeze is not always caused by asthma. Asthma doesn't usually cause the following:

- Phlegm or wet, rattily coughs
- Difficulty putting weight on
- Chest infections needing antibiotics
- Wheeze only with cold viruses in the under 5's

What do I do if I think my child may have asthma?

If you think your child may have asthma, talk to your GP.

It can also be very helpful to keep a diary of symptoms and taking a video of your child when their symptoms are bad and show it to your doctor.