

# Asthma in Women



Asthma is a chronic condition that affects breathing. Anyone can develop asthma, but almost twice as many women as men have asthma. In the United States, 1 in 10 women have asthma. Here's what to know—and what to do to manage it.

## WHY IS THE ASTHMA BURDEN GREATER FOR WOMEN?

Scientists are studying why women are more impacted by asthma. Some of the reasons include:

### BIOLOGY

Changes in hormone levels, such as in menstruation, pregnancy, and menopause, can make asthma symptoms more severe. If you have asthma and it worsens during certain parts of your menstrual cycle, keep track of your symptoms on a calendar. This may help you avoid asthma triggers during times when you tend to have flare-ups. If you are pregnant or thinking of becoming pregnant, talk to your healthcare provider about how to monitor and treat your asthma during pregnancy.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**43% of women** with asthma have had an asthma attack in last year.

Black women are nearly **40% more likely** to have asthma than Black men.



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## WHY IS THE ASTHMA BURDEN GREATER FOR WOMEN? (continued)

### BODY WEIGHT

Women are at higher risk of having obesity. This can make asthma symptoms harder to manage. Losing just 5% to 10% of extra weight can help you control your asthma better.

### WORKPLACE EXPOSURES

Women often have jobs that expose them to indoor pollutants (such as cleaning products, cigarette smoke, dust mites, and mold) that can make asthma worse. If you have such exposures, report any new or worsening breathing problems to your healthcare provider and your workplace.

### FAMILY HISTORY

Women (and men, too) who have a parent with asthma have a higher risk of developing the condition.

## WHAT CAN I DO TO BETTER MANAGE MY ASTHMA?

Here's where to start:

### KNOW THE SYMPTOMS

Problems like coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, and shortness of breath are all signs of asthma.

### TALK TO A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

Together you can create an asthma action plan that works for you. This plan will help you:

- Think about the situations when your asthma seems worse. What seems to trigger your symptoms? Talk to a doctor about ways to try to avoid those situations.
- Understand what medications to take and when to take them. The plan should also explain what to do in an emergency.
- Learn to keep track of your symptoms between visits to know if your plan is working.

## THE GOOD NEWS?

With the right treatment plan, most people with asthma can lead full and active lives.

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