

## **Asthma: do you have it?**

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

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It turns out, sometimes people with asthma don't know they have it. They may think they just have a bothersome cough or allergies.

Common symptoms of asthma include: coughing (especially at night), wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, pain or pressure. The symptoms of asthma happen when the airways in their lungs tighten, inflame or fill with mucus. It's important to find out if your symptoms may be asthma.

It's also important to know that different people may have different symptoms. Some people may have only some of these symptoms, or they may have different symptoms at different times. One person's asthma symptoms may also vary from one asthma attack to the next. Symptoms may be mild during one asthma attack and severe during another.

Some people with asthma may go for long periods of time without having any symptoms. Then, their symptoms may get worse, and they may have asthma attacks. Others might have asthma symptoms every day. In addition, some people may only have asthma during exercise or with viral infections like colds.

Unfortunately, some people with asthma "get by" by limiting physical activity and avoiding doing things that might make their asthma worse. But people should not settle for "getting by." With the right medicines and knowledge, asthma can be well controlled. It is very important to make sure your asthma is properly diagnosed and treated.

Be sure to talk with a primary care doctor about any asthma symptoms. And ask for a free Asthma Toolkit. The program provides physicians in eastern Colorado with training and equipment to diagnose and treat asthma in the most effective way possible. Patients can also sign up for a telephone program that provides useful information about asthma and other free services. Doctors also get Asthma Toolkits filled with helpful information and peak flow meters for their patients.

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