

Asthma And Cold Weather

Winter brings cold weather and keeps us inside, where indoor triggers such as dust mites, pet allergens, smoke and viruses can worsen asthma symptoms. Cold, dry air may cause airways to tighten, making breathing more difficult. Winter is also the season for colds and influenza. Many asthma attacks are triggered by viral infections.

As with any other time of year, it is very important to keep your asthma under control. This includes having regular reviews with your doctor, taking the proper medication regularly, and avoiding your asthma triggers.

Managing winter triggers

- As cold air can trigger asthma, you could try wearing a scarf around your mouth, and try to breathe through your nose, which warms and humidifies the air.
- Avoid smoke from tobacco, fireplaces and wood stoves as this can trigger asthma symptoms.
- Make sure you use the kitchen vent when



cooking.

- If asthma limits your physical activity, then it is likely that your asthma is not under control – see your doctor if you have regular symptoms during or after exercising.
- Take your medications regularly, protect yourself from the cold, and warm up and cool down properly.
- Avoid colds and influenza.
- It is important to consult your doctor if symptoms are persistent or severe.

Here are a few exercise tips for asthmatics during the winter season.

- Avoid strenuous exercise in cold dry air, as cooling and drying of the bronchial airways can trigger an asthma attack.
- Be sure to “warm-up” and “cool-down” after strenuous exercise.
- When exercising in cold air, wear a scarf or facemask over the nose and mouth to warm the air you are breathing.
- Be sure to drink plenty of liquids before and after exercise to prevent drying of the airways.
- Exercise indoors when outdoor temperatures drop.
- The best year-round exercise for asthmatics is swimming in an indoor heated pool.

