

Exercise-Induced Asthma

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Asthma is a disease in which there is increased responsiveness of the trachea and bronchi to various stimuli, resulting in widespread narrowing of the airways. Exercise-induced asthma is an asthma attack which occurs after exercise. It occurs in about 85 percent of all asthmatics following physical activity and it also occurs in persons who have no respiratory problems except while exercising.

A person with exercise-induced asthma may begin exercise feeling well and breathing comfortably. About eight to ten minutes into exercise, constriction of the airway occurs. If exercise is stopped after the initial ten minutes, the peak of the attack will occur five minutes after exercise has ceased, resolving itself in about an hour or less. But, if the person is able to continue exercising beyond the initial ten minutes, they often experience a gradual lessening of symptoms. This is called the “run through” phenomenon.

A number of factors can intensify or add to the severity of exercise-induced asthma. Seasonal allergies, high pollen counts, respiratory tract infections, smoke, cold weather, dry air and stress all contribute to the condition.

Many asthmatics cope with their disorder by taking drugs. It is important for the person with asthma to be aware of effective treatment options which exist in addition to or in place of long term drug therapy.

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