



CFP

CARTER FAMILY PRACTICE

MODERN MEDICINE, CLASSIC CARE

#2

RECOGNIZING ASTHMA SYMPTOMS

— Knowing What Your Body Is Telling You —



Asthma symptoms can vary from person to person and may change over time. Some people experience symptoms every day, while others only notice them during exercise, allergy season, or when they have a respiratory infection. Learning to recognize your symptoms early is one of the best ways to keep asthma well controlled.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

Asthma can affect your lungs in different ways. You may experience one symptom or several.



WHEEZING

A whistling or squeaky sound when you breathe.



CHEST TIGHTNESS

A feeling of pressure or discomfort in your chest.



SYMPTOMS DURING EXERCISE

Coughing, shortness of breath, or tightness that happens when you are active.



SHORTNESS OF BREATH

Feeling like you can't get enough air or that it's hard to take a deep breath.



COUGHING, ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT OR EARLY MORNING

A dry or wet cough that may wake you up from sleep.



Not everyone experiences every symptom. Some people may mainly have a cough, while others rarely wheeze.

EARLY WARNING SIGNS

These signs may mean your asthma isn't as well controlled as it could be.



Symptoms becoming more frequent



Waking up coughing or short of breath at night



Shortness of breath during activities that are usually easy



Coughing that lingers after exercise or a respiratory illness



Symptoms interfering with work, school, sleep, or daily activities



Recognizing changes early gives us the opportunity to adjust your asthma management before symptoms become more severe.

WHEN DO SYMPTOMS OFTEN OCCUR?

You may notice asthma symptoms:



During exercise



At night or early in the morning



During allergy season



When you have a cold or other respiratory infection



Around smoke or strong odors



In cold air



The reasons these situations trigger asthma—and how to reduce their impact—are covered in Field Note #4. →

WHEN IT'S NOT "JUST ALLERGIES"

Allergies and asthma can cause similar symptoms, but they affect different parts of your body.

ALLERGIES (Affects the nose and eyes)	ASTHMA (Affects the lungs)
Sneezing	Wheezing
Itchy, watery eyes	Chest tightness
Runny nose	Shortness of breath
Nasal congestion	Persistent cough



Many people have both allergies and asthma. Allergies affect your nose and eyes, while asthma affects your lungs. If you're coughing, wheezing, or having trouble breathing, asthma may be contributing to your symptoms.



Karen's Perspective

“One of the biggest mistakes I see is people waiting until they're having significant breathing problems before asking for help. The earlier we recognize changes in your symptoms, the easier it is to keep your asthma under control.”

— Karen

Questions for Karen



Which of my symptoms are most important to pay attention to?



How can I tell if my symptoms are getting worse?



When should I contact Karen about my symptoms?



QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS TOPIC?

Karen's Corner

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Have a question after reading this Field Note? Send it to Karen's Corner. Your question may even inspire a future educational resource.



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