

## CONTENTS

Introduction	
<b>Chapter 1-What is Asthma and How Widespread Is It?</b>	<b>15</b>
A brief history	15
Symptoms of asthma	16
Asthma-facts and figures	17
Asthma across the UK	18
Asthma triggers	19
The risk factors associated with asthma	21
Asthma attacks	22
How can I tell if I am going to have an attack?	23
Symptoms of an asthma attack	23
Peak flow test	24
Measuring peak flow	26
Peak flow score	27
Peak flow is low	27
What are the signs of a severe asthma attack?	28
What to do when you have an asthma attack	29
What to do after an attack	29
Stay healthy and take regular exercise.	31
<b>Chapter 2-The Different Types of Asthma</b>	<b>35</b>
Occupational asthma	36
Signs and Symptoms of Occupational Asthma	38
Preventing asthma attacks caused by OA	39

What your employer needs to do	40
How is occupational asthma confirmed?	41
Can occupational asthma be cured?	42
Difficult to control and severe asthma	43
Severe asthma	43
The causes of severe asthma	43
Developing severe asthma	44
Risks of long-term damage to the lungs	44
Complications of severe asthma	45
Severe asthma treatment	45
Medications	45
Lifestyle changes	46
Difficult to control asthma	47
Patterns of difficult-to-control asthma	48
Is the diagnosis correct?	49
Factors contributing to loss of asthma control	51
Psychological factors	51
Concordance with medication	51
Adult onset asthma	53
The difference between childhood asthma and adult onset asthma	53
Diagnosing adult onset asthma	54
Performing a methacholine challenge test	54
Performing a chest X-ray	55
Childhood asthma	56
Seasonal asthma	57

Winter	58
Spring	58
Summer and autumn	58
How can you prevent seasonal asthma?	59
How to prevent asthma in cold, damp weather	59
How to prevent hot weather triggering your asthma	60
How to stop spring pollen from triggering an asthma attack	60
Avoiding thunderstorm related asthma symptoms	61
<b>Chapter 3-Asthma Triggers Within the Home</b>	<b>65</b>
House Dust Mites	65
Symptoms of house dust mite allergy	66
Cleaning your house	67
Creating an anti-dust mite environment	69
Turn down the temperature	70
Spray your home with a disinfecting spray	70
Use eucalyptus	70
Controlling dust mites	71
Replace dust-collecting fabrics with easy-to-clean items	73
Groom pets regularly	74
Use mattress and pillow covers	74
Increase the ventilation in your house	74
Medicine available for dust mite allergies	74

\*

<b>Chapter 4-Asthma Medication and Treatments</b>	<b>81</b>
Inhalers	82
Reliever inhalers	82
Preventer inhalers	83
Tablets	84
Other treatments	86
Injections	86
Surgery	86
Complementary therapies	87
<b>Chapter 5-Childhood Asthma</b>	<b>91</b>
What Is Childhood Asthma?	91
Signs and Symptoms of Asthma in children	92
Causes and Triggers of Childhood Asthma	93
How Is Asthma Diagnosed in Children?	93
How Common Is Asthma in Children?	95
How Is Asthma Treated in Children?	95
When to Go to Accident and Emergency	97
How Do I Give Asthma Drugs to a Toddler?	98
What Are the Goals of Treating My Child's Asthma?	100
Will My Child Outgrow Asthma?	101
Why Is Childhood Asthma on the Rise?	101
<b>Chapter 6-Diet and Asthma</b>	<b>105</b>
Plant Foods	106
Drink milk	106

Fish	107
Fibre	107
Foods That Are Bad for Asthma	108
Excess Weight and Managing Asthma	108
Food allergies	109
How do you know food is one of your asthma triggers?	110
How to avoid food triggering asthma symptoms or an asthma attack	111
What are the most common food allergies or sensitivities?	112
How to cut the risk of food triggering asthma symptoms	113
<b>Chapter 7-Exercise and Asthma</b>	<b>117</b>
Exercise-induced asthma	118
Tips to help prevent exercise-induced asthma	119
Best and worst exercises for asthma	120
*	
<b>Appendix 1-Organisations that Exist to Help and Advise Those Suffering With Asthma</b>	
<b>Appendix 2. Useful advice for those suffering from Asthma – Travel and access to welfare benefits</b>	
<b>Appendix 3. Example Asthma Plan</b>	
Index	

## **Introduction**

### **Asthma deaths rise by 30% in a decade**

Deaths from asthma are at their highest level for a decade, with a third more people dying last year than in 2008.

Experts believe that as many as two thirds of the 1,422 fatalities recorded last year could have been prevented with better basic care, but said most of the 5.4 million people in Britain living with asthma were still not receiving the recommended treatment and advice.

Samantha Walker, director of research and policy at Asthma UK, said it was especially concerning that there had been a steady year-on-year increase. "We need to be taking a really intelligent look at this," she said. "If we keep on seeing this increase, that's really worrying. This is a trend for a significant increase in asthma deaths that we can't explain. One possible factor could be pollution, with a higher death rate recorded in southeast England. The data, for England and Wales, showed that child fatalities remained rare, with under-14s accounting for between ten and 20 of those who died of asthma each year. However, the number of adult fatalities has increased consistently. The largest rise, of 42 per cent, was seen among

35 to 44 –year-olds. Dr Walker said that while the charity did not know what was behind the trend, it was clear that people were still not taking the condition seriously. She stated:

"Doctors, nurses and people with asthma are complacent. This means that the basics are being overlooked." Simple interventions such as a written plan of action for how to respond to an attack and being taught how to use an inhaler properly can dramatically improve survival. Kay Boycott, chief executive of Asthma UK, added that the statistics showed that thousands of people had died needlessly in the past ten years. "The same mistakes are being made again and again because essential recommendations have not been implemented. This lack of action is costing lives and devastating families and communities."

Taking into account the above, it is the intention of this book to highlight all aspects of asthma generally and put forward ways to prevent asthma deteriorating further.

As we will see in chapter 1, asthma is a common lung condition that causes breathing difficulties. with varying degrees of severity. It affects people of all ages and often starts in childhood, although it can also develop for the first

## Explaining Asthma

time in adults. There's currently no cure, but there are simple treatments that can help keep the symptoms under control so it doesn't have a big impact on your life.

This comprehensive book, divided into seven parts, with two appendix dealing with welfare benefits and travel, looks at the causes of asthma and what can be done to alleviate them and what treatments are available. The book also looks at the things that can be done by the individual to minimise the effects of asthma.

Overall, the information contained within should be of significant help to those who suffer from asthma and its effects.