What is Asthma?

Understanding the basics of asthma

DC | HEALTH
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

What is Asthma?

- **Asthma** is a long-term condition that affects your lungs. Your airways (tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs) can become swollen and narrowed at times, making it hard to breathe.
- The **symptoms** of asthma can include wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing.

How to Know If I'm At Risk?

The following **risk factors** may increase your chances of developing asthma.

- Having a family history of asthma
- If you smoke, have smoked, or if someone in your home smokes
- If you live in places with air pollution
- If you live in a home that has mold, poor ventilation, or pests
- If you work at places where you are exposed to cleaning products, dusts (industrial or wood), chemical fumes, and molds

Talk to your doctor about managing your asthma!

2201 Shannon Place SE | Washington, DC 20020 | dchealth.dc.gov

What is Asthma?

How can asthma be managed?

- Talk to your doctor to find out the best ways to manage your asthma.
- Create a personal Asthma Action Plan with your provider and follow the plan: bit.ly/_AsthmaActionPlan
- Learn how to avoid asthma triggers like indoor and outdoor allergens, dust mites, secondhand smoke, mold and pests.
- Quit smoking, quit vaping, and avoid tobacco use.
- Take your asthma medicine exactly as your doctors prescribed.

For tips and resources to help you build and maintain healthy habits, you can visit:

» **LivingWell DC:** Visit livingwell.dc.gov/page/go-go-dc for tools to help you eat healthy, exercise, get healthy sleep, go to the doctor, and quit smoking.

» **DCQuitNow:** DCQuitNow offers no-cost programs, medications, and tips from former DC smokers that can help you stay tobacco-free. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW** or visit dcquitnow.org/

» **DC Healthy Housing Program:** Learn more about improving your family's home environments dchealth.dc.gov/service/healthy-housing-program-0

» **How to Manage Asthma:** Learn tips and resources to manage asthma through the American Lung Association: lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma