

Asthma

Description:

Asthma is a disorder affecting the airways of the lungs. People with asthma have very sensitive airways that narrow in response to certain "triggers", leading to difficulty in breathing. The airway narrowing is caused by inflammation and swelling of the airway lining, the tightening of the airway muscles, and the production of excess mucus. This results in a reduced airflow in and out of the lungs.

Asthma is Australia's most widespread chronic (long-term and persistent) health problem. It affects over 2 million Australians: 1 in 4 children, 1 in 7 teenagers and 1 in 10 adults. At present the cause of asthma is not known and there is no cure.

However, asthma is treatable: medications, asthma management and education are improving all the time. With appropriate treatment and a personal commitment to good self-management, most people with asthma can lead normal, active lives. Indeed, many are high-achieving sportspeople.

The Australian Government, through the Asthma Management Programme, promotes the 3+ visit plan as the best practice model of care for people with moderate to severe asthma.

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