



Hyperventilation

Causes

- Anxiety is the most common cause. (See **Anxiety** at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- **Panic attacks.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Central nervous system problems.

Treatment

Self-care may be enough to treat hyperventilation. If it persists or occurs with other symptoms, seek medical care.

Questions to Ask

Do you breathe rapidly and have any of these problems?

- Any **heart attack warning sign.** (See at www.HealthyLearn.com.)
- Bluish or purple color around your lips, fingernails, or skin.
- Asthma, emphysema, or a serious lung or heart problem.
- A seizure. (See **Seizures** at www.HealthyLearn.com.)



NO

Do you hyperventilate often? Or, have you had 4 or more panic attacks over a 4-week span?



NO



Self-Care / First Aid

- Open up a small paper bag. Loosely cover your nose and mouth with it. Breathe slowly into the bag. Rebreathe the air in the bag. Do this about 10 times. Set the bag aside. Breathe normally for a couple of minutes.
- Repeat the steps above for up to 15 minutes.
- Try to breathe slowly. Focus on taking one breath every 5 seconds.

See also **Self-Care / Prevention** for **Anxiety** at www.HealthyLearn.com.

{**Note:** If you still hyperventilate after using **Self-Care / First Aid**, call your doctor.}

Hyperventilation is breathing too deeply and faster than normal. This causes too much carbon dioxide to be exhaled. As a result, levels of carbon dioxide in the blood and brain tissue drop.

Signs & Symptoms

- Your heart pounds.
- It feels like you can't get enough air.
- You feel tingling and numbness in the arms, legs, and around the mouth.
- You feel a sense of doom.
- You may pass out.

Symptoms usually last 20 to 30 minutes, but seem to last hours. Though scary, hyperventilation is not usually dangerous.