



Wheezing

Wheezing means you are having a problem with breathing. Air is flowing through swollen or tight breathing tubes.

Signs & Symptoms

- A high-pitched squeaky or whistling sound. This is heard more on breathing out than in.
- Chest tightness.



Follow your doctor's advice to treat conditions that cause wheezing.

Causes

- Asthma (the main cause).
- Allergic reactions.
- Congestive heart failure.
- Respiratory infections.
- Something caught in the windpipe.
- Smoking, air pollution, etc.

Treatment

Treatment depends on the cause. Medication to relieve narrowing of the airways is usually given for acute attacks of wheezing.

Questions to Ask

With wheezing, do you have severe shortness of breath; blue-colored lips, skin, or fingernails; or are you unable to talk?



NO

With wheezing, do any of these problems occur?

- Decreasing level of consciousness or mental status changes.
- Fever higher than 101°F in a baby less than 3 months old; 104°F or higher in a child between 3 months and 3 years old.
- The wheezing started in the last few hours and bubbly pink or white phlegm is being coughed up.



NO

Did wheezing begin after an insect sting, taking medication, or exposure to something that caused a severe allergic reaction in the past?



NO

Does wheezing occur in a child between 3 months and 3 years of age who has a fever of 102.2°F and up to 104°F?



NO



Self-Care / Prevention

- Take prescribed medicines as directed.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer.
- Don't smoke. Avoid secondhand smoke.
- Chew foods well before swallowing. When you eat, try not to laugh and swallow at the same time.
- Keep small objects that can easily be inhaled away from children under age 5.

Flowchart continued in next column