



Definition of asthma

Asthma is a chronic inflammatory lung condition, clinically defined as the combination of variable respiratory symptoms (e.g. wheeze, breathlessness, chest tightness, cough) and variable airflow limitation.



Alert The defining features of asthma may not be detectable in treated patients.

'Asthma' is a diagnostic label for a group of lung diseases with various disease mechanisms.

Asthma phenotypes include allergic asthma, non-allergic asthma, aspirin-exacerbated respiratory disease, asthma with obesity, adult-onset asthma, cough-predominant asthma, and asthma with persistent airflow limitation.[GINA 2025, Kuruvilla 2019]

The diagnosis of asthma in adults and adolescents is based on:

- a history of typical symptoms (wheeze, breathlessness, chest tightness, cough) that vary over time in frequency and severity
- documented excessive variability in expiratory airflow and/or evidence of airway inflammation.

References

Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA). Global strategy for asthma management and prevention, 2025. Available from: www.ginasthma.org

Kuruvilla ME, Lee FE, Lee GB. Understanding asthma phenotypes, endotypes, and mechanisms of disease. Clin Rev Allergy Immunol 2019; 56: 219-233.