



1.3-2.6
MILLION

Number of Americans
with severe asthma

WHAT WILL MY DOCTOR LOOK FOR?

Symptoms doctors look for in asthma patients who may have severe asthma include:

- needing more than two types of maintenance medications and/or higher doses to control the asthma
- continuing to experience frequent asthma symptoms while using multiple maintenance medications
- having one or more life-threatening asthma attacks
- experiencing flare-ups requiring treatment with oral steroid medications (such as prednisone) two or more times a year
- needing to go to a hospital emergency department or requiring hospitalization for asthma in the past year

WHAT IS SEVERE ASTHMA?

Severe asthma occurs when asthma patients experience breathing problems that can't be controlled with regular use of inhalers.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF SEVERE ASTHMA?

While the symptoms of severe asthma are similar to those of regular asthma – wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and anxiousness – the degree and frequency of these symptoms are higher. For example, you may have:

- **difficulty breathing**, which wakes you up from sleeping
- **shortness of breath** even when you are not physically active
- **breathlessness** when you sit or lie down
- **chest tightness** all the time

In acute cases, you may experience the following symptoms, which require immediate medical attention:

- **trouble speaking** in complete sentences because you don't have enough breath
- **unexplained feelings** of confusion, agitation, or sleepiness
- **a blue tint** to your skin



5-10%

Percentage of people with asthma who have severe asthma

HOW IS SEVERE ASTHMA TREATED?

Treatment for severe asthma may include a combination of:

- increased dosage of medications
- increased use of medications
- the addition of corticosteroids in different forms (pill, injection, inhalation)
- medications to block allergies
- medications to keep air passages from closing up (bronchodilators)
- antibiotics and/or allergy shots
- advanced therapies, such as bronchial thermoplasty and biologics



Learn more by going to:
www.chestnet.org/Foundation/Patient-Education-Resources/Asthma.