

What is asthma?

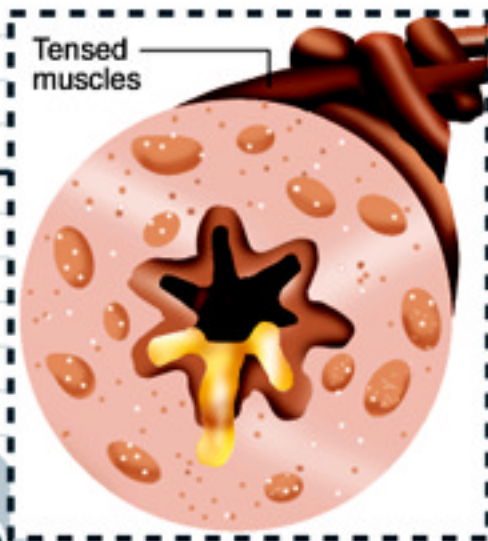
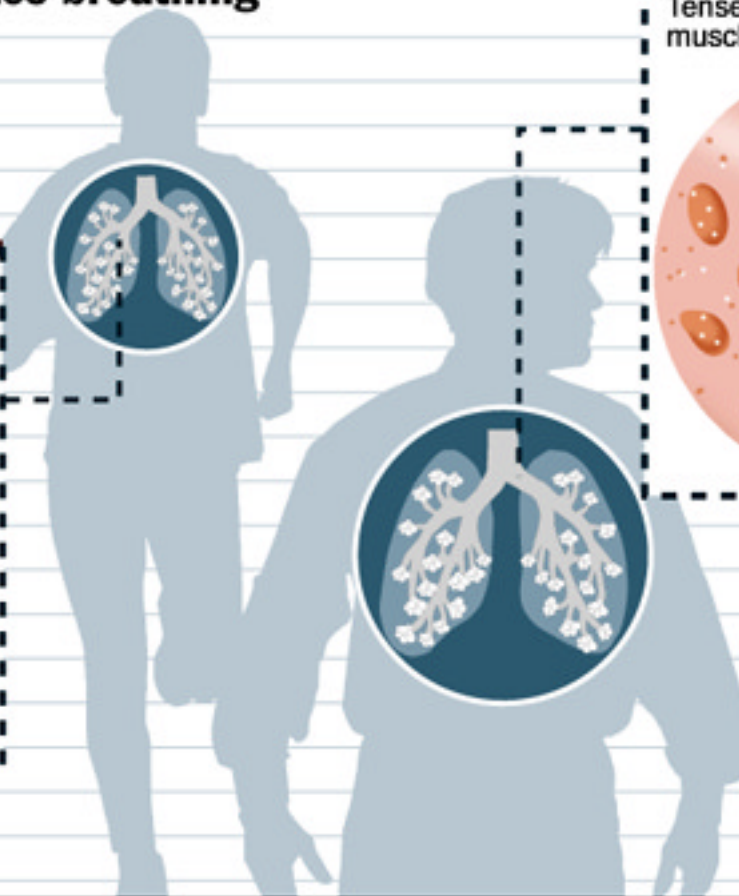
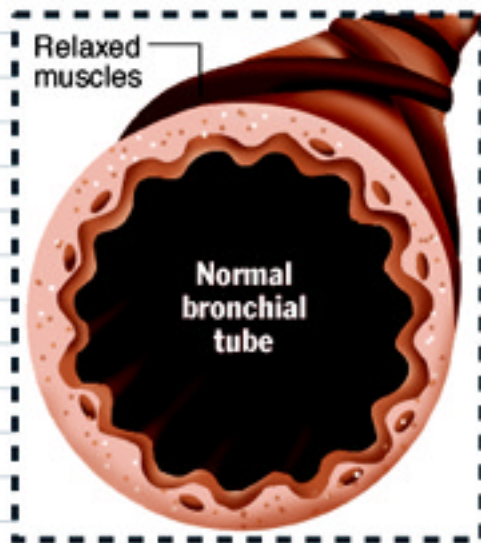
■ **Asthma is an incurable condition** marked by the chronic inflammation of the airways of the lung. It is developed among people who are genetically predisposed to it, and most often occurs after someone is repeatedly exposed to allergens or other irritants.

■ **It is caused by a flaw in** the immune system and is not contagious. It can be managed well with medication.

■ **The lungs of an asthmatic** are particularly sensitive, and an asthma attack can be triggered by exposure to an allergen, from oak pollen to cigarette smoke, or by sudden temperature changes and exercise. When that happens, the airways of the lungs swell and produce mucus. The muscles around the airways constrict.

How asthma complicates breathing

When a non-asthmatic person breathes, the muscles around the bronchial tubes are relaxed and the tissues thin, easing airflow.



Inflamed bronchial tube of asthmatic

When an asthmatic person breathes, the muscles of the bronchial tubes tighten and thicken. The air passages become inflamed and mucus-filled, making it difficult for air to move.