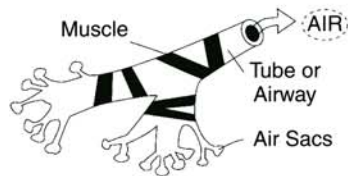


I. WHAT IS ASTHMA?

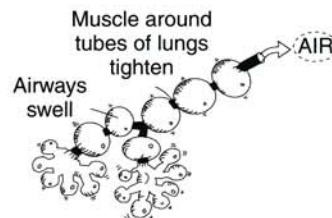
Asthma is a chronic lung disease. Symptoms may be mild and rare or frequent and life-threatening. When an asthmatic person is exposed to certain stimuli or triggers, these triggers will cause the muscles around the air passages to tighten. The lining of the airways becomes inflamed and swollen, often leading to excessive production of mucus. The excessive mucus further clogs the already narrowed airways. Air then has a hard time moving through the airways and in and out of the air sacs (alveoli), thus making breathing more difficult.

Major warning signs of an asthma attack:

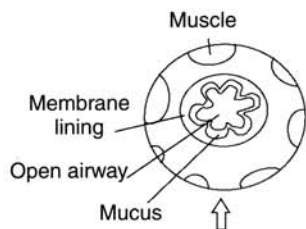
- Wheezing or whistling sound
- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness
- Persistent cough
- Excessive mucus production



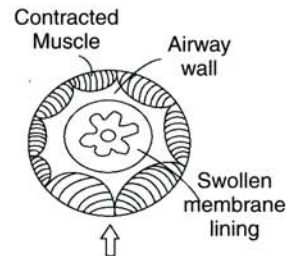
Normal airway



Asthma episode airway



Enlarged cross section of a bronchial tube in normal breathing



Enlarged cross section of a bronchial tube in an asthma episode