

Care Management for Members with Chronic Health Conditions

Asthma and Sleep Apnea



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Objectives

Recognize the signs, symptoms, and risk factors of asthma and/or sleep apnea

Explain how asthma and/or sleep apnea are diagnosed and treated

Identify how care managers can support members with asthma and/or sleep apnea through education, care coordination, and reducing barriers to treatment

Asthma

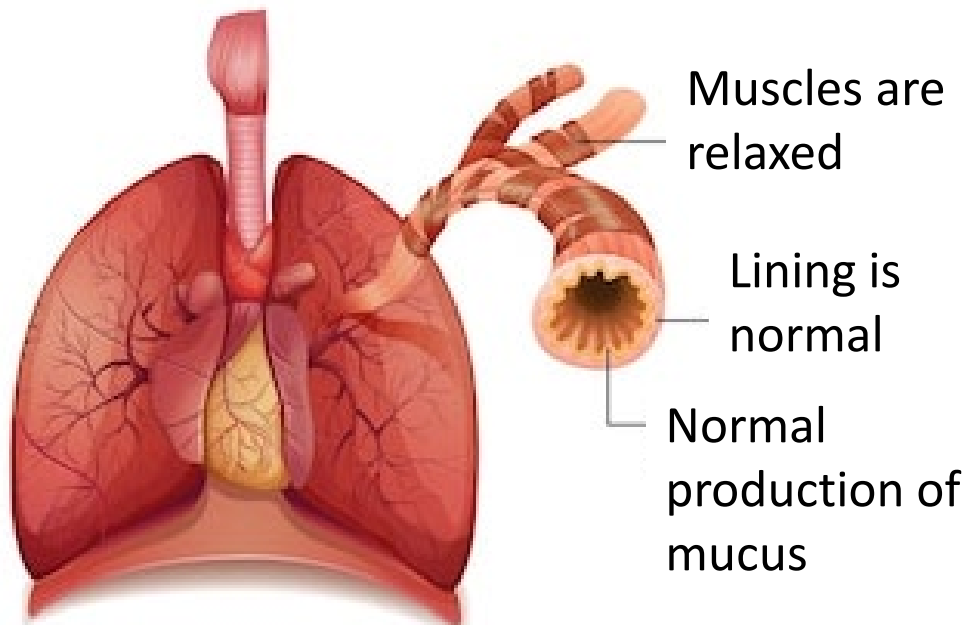


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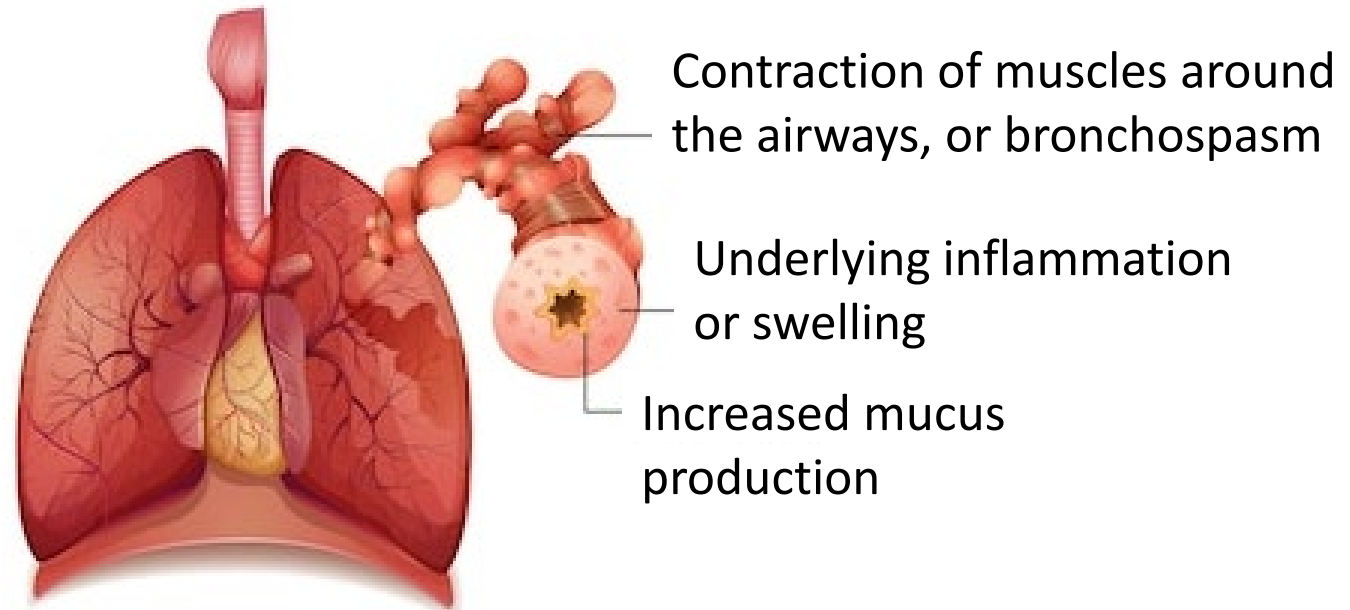
What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic (long-term) condition that affects the airways in the lungs.

With asthma, the airways can become inflamed and narrowed at times, making it harder for air to flow out of the airways when a person breathes.



Lung *without* asthma



Lung *with* asthma

What percentage of U.S. adults have asthma?

- A. 1 in 50
- B. 1 in 25
- C. 1 in 12
- D. 1 in 5



Risk Factors



Genetics



Allergies



Obesity



Smoking



Environment



Person's sex/age



Workplace

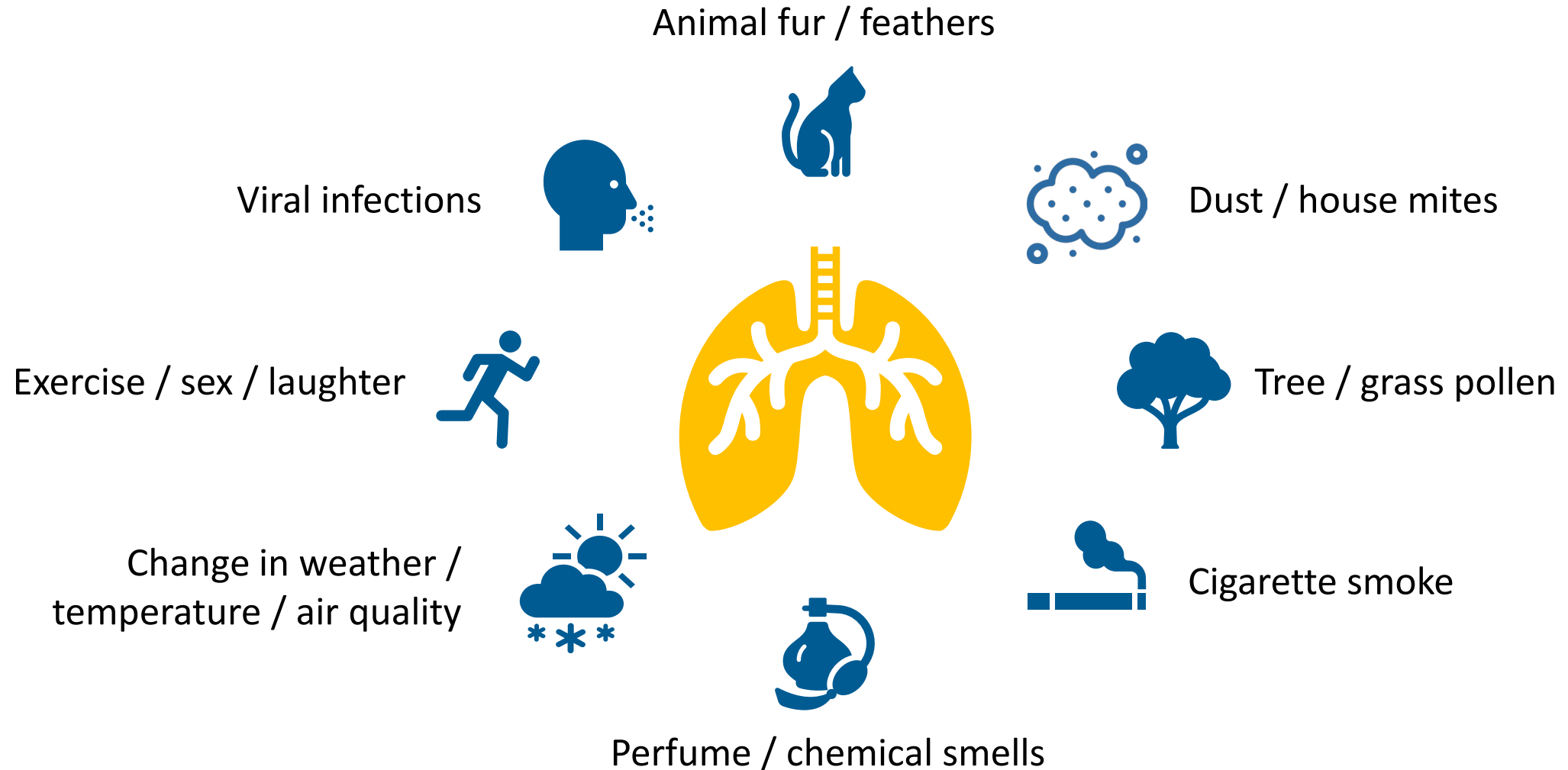


Ethnicity



Stress

Common Triggers



Asthma Symptoms and Complications

Symptoms

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing or noisy breathing
- Chest tightness
- Coughing (especially at night or early morning and during exercise or laughing)
- Difficulty sleeping

Complications

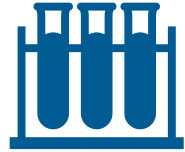
- Frequent emergency department (ED) visits or hospitalizations
- Reduced quality of life
- Fatigue or sleep disturbance
- Worsening of other chronic conditions (e.g., Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease [COPD], heart disease)
- Missed school or work

How Asthma Is Diagnosed



Physical Exam

- Primary care provider (PCP) or specialists



Allergy Testing

- Identify environmental triggers



Pulmonary Function Test (PFT)

- Check lung strength and airflow



Rule Out Other Conditions

- Vocal cord dysfunction
- Reflux

Treatments

- Rescue inhalers
 - *Examples: ProAir, Ventolin, Proventil, Xopenex*
- Nebulizers
 - *Examples: Albuterol, Levalbuterol*
- Preventive long-term medications
 - *Examples: QVAR, Advair, Flovent, Asmanex, Symbicort, Spiriva*
- Oral medications
 - *Examples: Singulair*
- Biologics
 - *Examples: Fasenra, Nucala*



The Care Manager's Role in Asthma Support

- ✓ Encourage follow-up appointments with PCP and other specialists
- ✓ Provide education about when to seek immediate help
- ✓ Encourage daily use of controller inhalers
- ✓ Identify Social Determinants or Drivers of Health (SDOH) factors and support addressing needs
- ✓ Share materials on avoiding triggers
- ✓ Provide referrals that might need to be scheduled

Goal = Reduce the symptoms of asthma and ED and/or inpatient visits, improve quality of life for members with asthma, and connect to the right services at the right time

What Would You Do?

A 16-year-old member was recently treated in the ED for an asthma flare-up.

When the care manager investigated this further, they found that the member had:

- Missed multiple PCP follow-up appointments
- Did not pick up prescribed inhalers
- Vapes regularly
- Diagnosed with seasonal allergies



As a care manager, which of the following is **NOT** an appropriate next step in supporting this teenage member?

- A. Schedule an in-home assessment
- B. Coordinate with the PCP to reschedule missed appointments and ensure inhaler access
- C. Educate the member about the risks of unmanaged asthma, referral to cessation programs, and provide written materials
- D. Tell the member they have to wait for their next Dr. Apt to get medication for the Asthma



Sleep Apnea



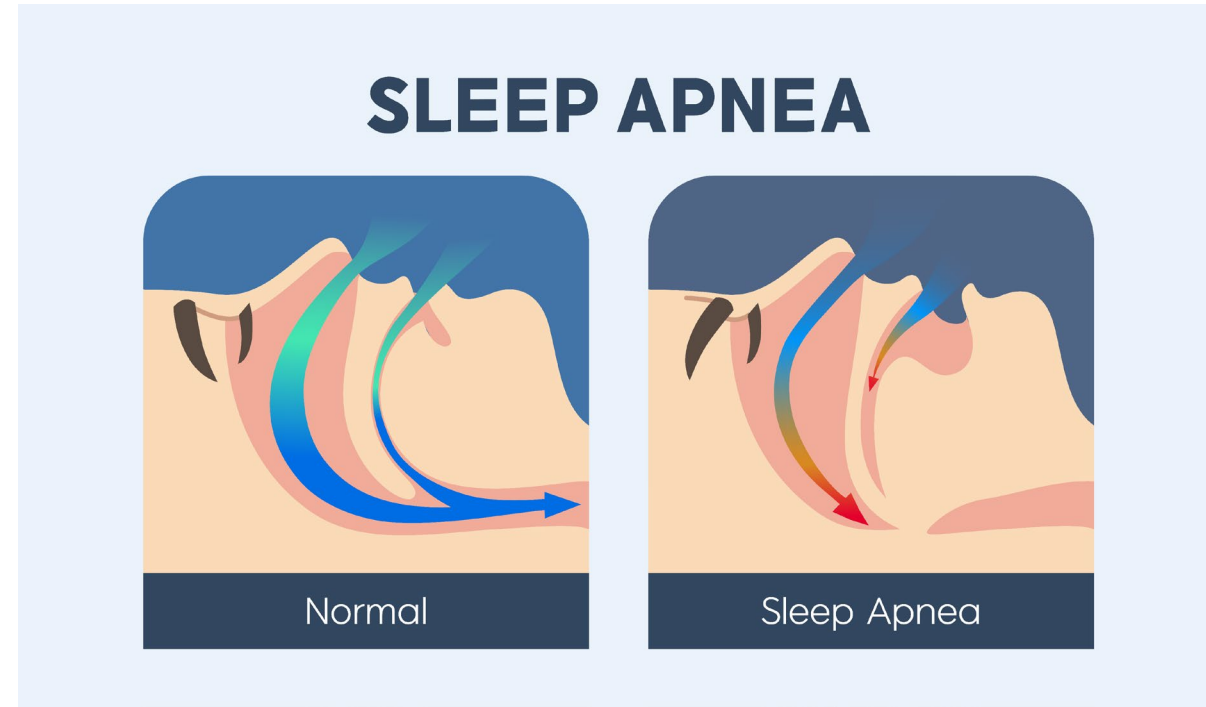
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What Is Sleep Apnea?

Sleep apnea is a serious sleep disorder where breathing repeatedly stops and starts during sleep.

Three types:

- **Obstructive Sleep Apnea (OSA):** Most common; throat muscles collapse
- **Central Sleep Apnea (CSA):** The brain doesn't send proper signals to muscles that control breathing
- **Complex Sleep Apnea:** A combination of both types



What percentage of U.S. adults between ages 30 and 70 are estimated to have sleep apnea?

- A. 5%
- B. 12%
- C. 26%
- D. 42%



Risk Factors for Sleep Apnea



Family History



Age



Obesity



Smoking



Male sex



**Chronic Health
Conditions**



**Neurological
Disorders**

Signs and Symptoms of Sleep Apnea



Daytime fatigue or sleepiness



Loud, chronic snoring



Gasping, choking, or pauses in breathing during sleep



Morning headaches



Irritability or mood changes



Trouble concentrating or forgetfulness

How Sleep Apnea Is Diagnosed



Physical Exam

- Rule out other causes (e.g., nasal obstruction, jaw/tonsil structure)



Health and Sleep History

- Sleep quality, medication use, sleepwalking/talking
- Family history and daytime symptoms



Sleep Study

- Overnight monitoring of breathing, oxygen, heart, and brain activity
- In-lab studies provide more detail
- Home tests are more accessible



Sleep Diary or Screeners

- Track patterns and sleep quality over time

Common Treatments for Sleep Apnea

Medical Treatments

Continuous Positive Airway Pressure (CPAP) Therapy

- Gold standard for OSA

Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure (BiPAP) or Auto-Adjusting Positive Airway Pressure (APAP) devices

- Alternatives to CPAP

Oral appliances

- Custom mouthpieces that keep the airways open

Surgical options

- For structural issues (e.g., enlarged tonsils, deviated septum)

Medications

- Zepbound

Lifestyle and Behavioral Strategies

Weight loss

- Reduces airway obstruction in many patients

Quit smoking

- Decreases inflammation and airway reactivity

Avoid alcohol and sedatives before bed

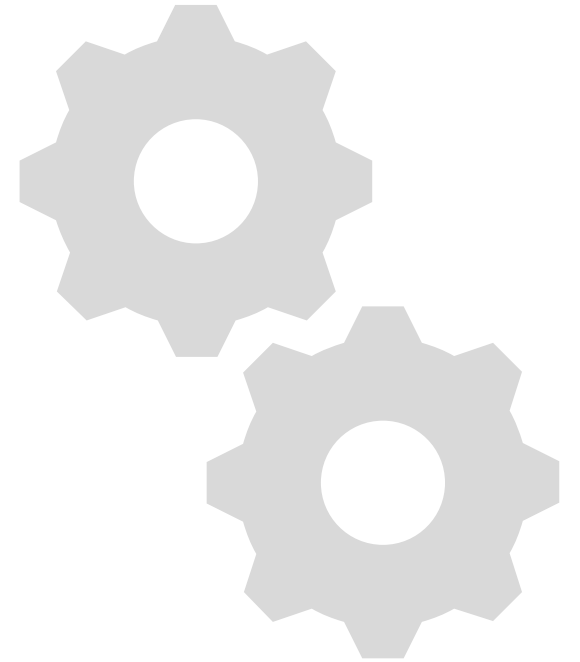
- These relax throat muscles and worsen apnea

Positional therapy

- Sleeping on the side instead of the back

The Care Manager's Role in Sleep Apnea Support

- ✓ Share practical tools and resources
- ✓ Recognize red flags (e.g., sleepiness, snoring, fatigue)
- ✓ Support referrals and follow-up appointments with PCPs or sleep specialists
- ✓ Educate on when to seek urgent care
- ✓ Coordinate with Durable Medical Equipment (DME) vendors for timely equipment setup and training
- ✓ Monitor equipment use and troubleshoot with the care team
- ✓ Help address treatment barriers like transportation, discomfort, stigma, or supply needs



Sleep apnea is **treatable**, and care managers help make that possible.

What Would You Do?

A member with an intellectual/developmental disability lets their care manager know:

- They have been diagnosed with sleep apnea
- Reports they can't keep the CPAP mask on and don't use the machine
- Has questions about equipment and hasn't received what they need
- Needs help understanding alternate options, use of equipment, and making follow-up visits with their care provider



As a care manager, what is the most appropriate next step?

- A. Refer the member to a behavioral therapist for sleep coaching
- B. Schedule a follow-up with the prescribing sleep doctor to reassess equipment and options
- C. Close the issue for now and revisit at the next monthly staffing
- D. Send the member printed instructions on CPAP usage



Asthma Information Sources

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