

Definition

Wheezing is a high-pitched whistling sound associated with labored breathing.

Description

Wheezing occurs when a child or adult tries to breathe deeply through air passages that are narrowed or filled with mucus as a result of:

allergy
infection
illness
irritation

Wheezing is most common when exhaling. It is sometimes accompanied by a mild sensation of tightness in the chest. Anxiety about not being able to breathe easily can cause muscle tension that makes matters worse.

Causes and symptoms

Wheezing is the symptom most associated with asthma. It can be caused by:
exposure to allergens (food, pollen, and other substances, that cause a person to have an allergic reaction)
fumes
ice-cold drinks, or very cold air
medication
strenuous exercise
weather changes.
foreign objects trapped in the airway
cystic fibrosis, and other genetic disorders
respiratory illnesses like pneumonia, bronchitis, congestive heart failure, and emphysema

Prevention

Stopping smoking can eliminate wheezing. So can reducing or preventing exposure to other substances that cause the problem.