

What Appears as Uncontrolled Asthma May Actually be Severe Reflux

Breathing issues that mimic asthma often caused by GERD when reflux enters lungs

National Jewish Health

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Package Length: 1:46	Content provided by: National Jewish Health

NEWS PACKAGE

SUGGESTED TEASE	UNCONTROLLED ASTHMA SYMPTOMS MAY NOT BE CAUSED BY ASTHMA AT ALL. COMING UP HOW LUNG AND BREATHING ISSUES MAY ACTUALLY START WITH YOUR STOMACH.
ANCHOR LEAD	FOR MOST OF THE TWENTY-FIVE MILLION AMERICANS LIVING WITH ASTHMA ¹ , SYMPTOMS CAN BE CONTROLLED WITH AN INHALER OR A PILL ² . BUT FOR SOME, ASTHMA MEDICATIONS JUST DON'T SEEM TO WORK. NOW DOCTORS ARE DISCOVERING THAT WHAT CAUSES WORSENING ASTHMA SYMPTOMS MAY NOT BE ASTHMA AT ALL, BUT ACTUALLY STARTS IN THE STOMACH. BARB CONSIGLIO HAS THE DETAILS ON A COMMON MISDIAGNOSIS AND HOW A NEW APPROACH TO BREATHING ISSUES CAN CLEAR THE AIR.
(PACKAGE START) ----- CG: Courtesy: National Jewish Health :00 - :03 Shots of Michelle taking pill	(Nats - Sound) :02 FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, MICHELLE SKELDON (SKELL-din) WAS PRESCRIBED STRONGER AND STRONGER ASTHMA MEDICATIONS AS HER BREATHING SYMPTOMS WORSENERED. :06
CG: Michelle Skeldon GERD was mistaken for asthma	<i>"Just to walk up maybe five steps, you know, it was extremely hard for me and it was hard to breathe. And at one point I was actually on oxygen."</i> :09
Shots of Michelle in exam with Dr. King	AFTER DEVELOPING A DANGEROUS CASE OF BACTERIAL PNEUMONIA, SHE WAS FINALLY REFERRED TO A PULMONOLOGIST AT NATIONAL JEWISH HEALTH WHO REALIZED SHE SHOULD ACTUALLY BE TREATED BY A GASTROENTEROLOGIST. THAT'S WHERE DOCTOR JEFFREY KING CAME IN. :11

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<p>CG: Jeffrey B. King, MD National Jewish Health</p>	<p><i>“What we try to do is take a step back and say, ‘Is there a root cause of those lung symptoms? And is it possible that this isn’t asthma?’” :08</i></p>
<p>Shots of Michelle doing barium test</p>	<p>EXTENSIVE TESTING REVEALED THE TRUE CAUSE OF MICHELLE’S BREATHING ISSUES. :04</p>
<p>Dr. King (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“It was found that she actually had a fair amount of acid and nonacid reflux.” :06</i></p>
<p>Shots of Dr. King reviewing endoscopy images</p>	<p>GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE, OR GERD, CAN OFTEN WORSEN OR EVEN BE MISTAKEN FOR ASTHMA. AND DOCTOR KING SAYS FINDING AND TREATING THE REFLUX IS VERY OFTEN THE SOLUTION TO UNCONTROLLED BREATHING PROBLEMS. :12</p>
<p>Dr. King (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“In my rough estimation, about 70% to 75% of those patients have abnormal amounts of reflux that are often contributing.” :10</i></p>
<p>Graphic showing how liquid travels from stomach to lungs</p>	<p>WHILE SOME REFLUX IS NORMAL, IT BECOMES AN ISSUE IN THE LUNGS WHEN THE CONTENTS OF THE STOMACH TRAVELS UP THE ESOPHAGUS AND INTO THE BACK OF THE THROAT, WHICH ALLOWS LIQUID TO FLOW INTO THE AIRWAY AND ENTER THE LUNGS. :12</p>
<p>Dr. King (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“That can cause a slew of symptoms including cough, hoarseness, shortness of breath, pneumonias.” :09</i></p>
<p>Shots of Michelle gardening</p>	<p>LIFESTYLE CHANGES, MEDICATION OR, IN MICHELLE’S CASE, SURGERY, CAN PREVENT STOMACH CONTENTS FROM REACHING THE LUNGS. :07</p>
<p>Michelle Skeldon (CG’d earlier)</p>	<p><i>“As soon as I had the surgery done, it was a totally different world. You know, the coughing stopped. // It was amazing. It was like night and day.” :09</i></p>
<p>Shots of Michelle walking with husband</p>	<p>AT NATIONAL JEWISH HEALTH, THIS IS BARB CONSIGLIO REPORTING. :03</p>
<p>(PACKAGE END) -----</p>	<hr/>
<p>ANCHOR TAG</p>	<p>EXPERTS SAY GERD OFTEN GOES UNCHECKED BECAUSE REFLUX IS NOT ALWAYS ACIDIC, MEANING IT DOESN’T CAUSE THE CLASSIC HEARTBURN OR INDIGESTION THAT WE ASSOCIATE IT WITH. HOWEVER, IF NOT TREATED, IT CAN HAVE DANGEROUS LONG-TERM EFFECTS SUCH AS AN INCREASED RISK OF ESOPHAGEAL CANCER AND</p>

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	<p>PERMANENT LUNG DAMAGE.</p> <p>IF YOU HAVE UNCONTROLLED COUGHING OR WORSENING ASTHMA, IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO SEE A SPECIALIST TO EXAMINE IF YOUR LUNG PROBLEMS ARE ACTUALLY CAUSED BY GERD.</p>
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SOCIAL MEDIA

<p> Share it! Suggested tweet:</p> <p> Suggested post:</p>	<p>When asthma symptoms worsen and medications don't help, it may not be asthma at all. Experts at @NJHealth say issues in the lungs may actually be caused by GERD, and that treating reflux is often the solution. http://bit.ly/2orefUL.</p> <hr/> <p>What appears to be uncontrolled asthma may not be asthma at all. Experts at National Jewish Health say GERD is often misdiagnosed as asthma, but getting an accurate diagnosis and treating reflux often provides relief patients have sought for years. http://bit.ly/2orefUL.</p>
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EXTRA BITES

<p>CG: Jeffrey B. King, MD National Jewish Health</p>	<p>King says reflux diagnoses are common if you know to look for it: <i>"It's not until you think about lung conditions from a multidisciplinary approach that you start looking for things such as reflux. And once you start looking for things like reflux, you find that it's much more common."</i> :17</p> <p>King says worsening asthma symptoms should be checked for other causes: <i>"If a patient is having more and more symptoms, is requiring more and more medications, and/or is not responding to those medications as well as they previously did, that should set off alarm bells that some other condition may be causing their symptoms."</i> :19</p> <p>King says it's common for GERD to be misdiagnosed as asthma: <i>"It is very common for us to see people here at National Jewish who have come to us with a diagnosis of asthma. And once we put them through formal pulmonary testing, we actually find that they probably don't have asthma at all."</i> :14</p> <p>King says reflux is normal until it travels to places it shouldn't: <i>"We all have reflux throughout the day. Reflux is actually a normal event that happens. It's only when it, in certain people, when it becomes too much, or when it's getting to places where it shouldn't be getting, that it can cause problems or symptoms."</i> :15</p>
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<p>CG: Michelle Skeldon GERD was mistaken for asthma</p>	<hr/> <p>Michelle describes her frustration when inhalers weren't helping: <i>"I need to go a different route and we need to try to figure out what else is going on because the inhalers are not working."</i> :08</p> <p>Michelle describes her improvement after surgery: <i>"The oxygen stats went up where I was supposed to be, so the oxygen tank went away. I played with my granddaughters, you know, didn't have a problem. It was amazing."</i> :12</p> <p>Michelle describes what it was like to finally get an accurate diagnosis: <i>"It was kind of like I was vindicated when they looked at me and they said, 'This is not asthma. You have acid reflux.'" :06</i></p>
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References

¹*Asthma Facts and Figures*, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, June 2019. Online: <https://www.aafa.org/asthma-facts/>

²*Asthma Treatment*, Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, 2019. Online: <https://www.aafa.org/asthma-treatment/>

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1800 West 5th Ave.
Columbus, Ohio 43212
Phone: (614) 932-9950 Fax: (614) 932-9920
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