

Living With Asthma

Symptoms of asthma change from day to day or month to month or season to season. You can feel fine one minute and all of a sudden not be able to breathe. Asthma can be frustrating and make you feel upset, depressed or out of control. The good news is that asthma can be controlled. Work with your doctor to develop an effective asthma management plan. You should be able to sleep through the night and be able to participate in activities just like anyone else. Did you know that a large percentage of Olympians have asthma? They don't let it stop them from living their life and achieving their goals!

According to National Guidelines, the goals for asthma are to:

- Prevent symptoms of asthma (e.g. coughing or breathlessness in the daytime, in the night, or after exertion).
- Use a quick-relief (rescue inhaler not more than twice a week).
- Maintain "normal" or almost normal lung function.
- Maintain normal activity levels (including exercise and other physical activity and attendance at work or school).
- Meet your expectation of and satisfaction with asthma care.
- Prevent asthma flare-ups and need for emergency room/hospital use.
- Prevent loss of lung function; for children, prevent reduced lung growth.
- Take the best medications for your asthma with few or no side effects.

How to manage your asthma

Asthma can be managed. Good asthma control starts with a "partnership" with your primary asthma doctor.

- Work with your doctor to set goals for your asthma.
- Learn what your asthma triggers are. If necessary get tested for allergies. This will help you learn if you have any allergic triggers.
- Take your long-term controller medications every day and use your quick-relief (rescue) medicine only as needed and instructed by your doctor.
- Have your doctor write an asthma action plan for you and use it. Share your child's asthma action plan with daycare and/or schools, babysitters, and other caregivers.
- Get your flu shot EVERY year. You are at high risk for pneumonia and death from the flu.

Source: 2017 GINA Report, *Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention*