



Take Charge of Your Asthma

You may have asthma. But, that doesn't mean it has to control your life. By managing your asthma, you can take charge of your life.

Teamwork: Working with your doctor

You and your asthma doctor are a team working together to best manage your asthma. It is important for you to take an active role in your asthma care.

Tips to success:

- Make a doctor appointment to talk about your asthma. Don't wait until your asthma is bothering you. According to National Guidelines, everyone with asthma should see their doctor to talk about asthma two times a year (every 6 months).
- Be prepared for your doctor appointment. Bring all of your medicines and any questions you may have.
- Tell your doctor about any symptoms you have had. Be clear.
- Make sure your written Asthma Management Plan is updated and you understand how to use it.
- Ask your doctor what you should do when you have an asthma attack or flare-up. This should be a part of your written Asthma Management Plan.
- Ask questions about anything you do not understand.
- Talk to your doctor about your medications. Tell them exactly how you are taking them and how many doses you may have forgotten to take. Show your doctor how you use the medications. He will check to be sure you are using them correctly. You can also ask your pharmacist to check how you are using your medications. Up to 90% of people do not use their asthma inhalers properly. Asthma medicines do not work as well and have greater risk for side effects when not used correctly.
- Make sure you know the names of your medicines, how to use them, when to take them, what to expect and how they will make you feel.
- Share Peak Flow readings with your doctor.
- Get your flu shot every year as recommended by the CDC to protect your lungs from pneumonia and possible death.

(continued on the next page)

During your doctor appointment

Tell your doctor:

- What medicines you are taking.
- How often you take your controller medicine.
- How often you take your quick-relief medicine.
- What symptoms you are having.
- Whether you are able to sleep through the night every night.
- How your asthma limits you.

Ask your doctor:

- Do I need allergy testing to help me know what my triggers are?
- How do I know if my asthma is well controlled?
- Should I get a lung function test to see how serious my asthma really is?
- What medicines should I be taking? When? How often? Does my Asthma Management Plan need updated?
- Once I know my asthma triggers, how do I avoid them?

Achieving your asthma goals

You are the most important member of your asthma team. The actions that you take directly affect your life.

- Learn what is different about lungs that have asthma.
- Find out what your triggers are for asthma. Get allergy tested.
- Take steps to avoid triggers once you learn what they are.
- Ask your doctor to write an Asthma Management Plan for you.
- Follow your Asthma Management Plan, share it with others who help take care of asthma (schools, daycare, grandparents, etc.).
- Take your asthma medications according to your written Asthma Action Plan.
- Learn how to use your asthma medications and devices correctly.
- Share facts about asthma, your triggers, and your Asthma Management Plan with your family. Your family can help support you with your asthma.
- Always let your doctor know how you are doing.

Always know: There is no cure for asthma. It does not go away when your symptoms go away. Do not be caught off guard without your medications. Asthma cannot be cured only managed. You are the key to successful management of your asthma.