

Managing Asthma

Asthma is chronic disease of the airways in the lungs. We do not yet have a cure for asthma, but it can be managed and controlled. Taking control of asthma means less sick days, less trips to the emergency room or urgent care setting, and less hospital admissions due to asthma. Good asthma management includes four important components: monitoring symptoms and lung function with the use of an Asthma Action Plan and Peak Flow Meter, asthma education, controlling environmental triggers, and using medicines.

Monitoring Symptoms and Lung Function

The peak flow meter works by measuring your ability to force air out of your lungs after a full inhale. Using a peak flow meter daily will help you monitor your asthma symptoms and learn when your asthma may be getting worse.

The Asthma Action Plan (AAP), should be written together with your doctor to help you keep your asthma under control. The AAP has special instructions for taking care of asthma daily. The AAP also works together with your Peak Flow to help you monitor asthma symptoms. Your AAP is divided into three zones (green, yellow and red); like the traffic signals. Using a peak flow meter to track your asthma symptoms together with the AAP can help you monitor and keep your asthma under control.



ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Personal Best Peak Flow:

Height (cm)	Height (in)	Height Predicted (Feet) (ft/min)	Green zone (80-100%)	Yellow zone (50-79%)	Red Zone (< 50%)
109	43	3'7"	147	74	117
112	44	3'8"	150	80	127
114	45	3'9"	153	87	137
117	46	3'10"	157	94	149
119	47	3'11"	160	100	159
122	48	4'	171	107	170
124	49	4'1"	182	114	181
127	50	4'2"	192	120	191
130	51	4'3"	203	127	202
132	52	4'4"	214	134	213
137	54	4'6"	234	147	233
140	55	4'7"	246	154	245
142	56	4'8"	256	160	255
145	57	4'9"	267	167	266
147	58	4'10"	278	174	277
150	60	4'11"	288	180	287
152	60	5'	298	187	297
155	61	5'1"	307	194	309
157	62	5'2"	316	200	319
160	63	5'3"	330	207	329
163	64	5'4"	342	214	341
165	65	5'5"	352	220	351
168	66	5'6"	363	227	362
170	67	5'7"	374	234	373

267 personal best number

Green Zone: (80-100 % of your personal best) your asthma is in good control, you can continue with your AAP.

Yellow Zone: (60-80 % of your personal best) caution, you have probably been exposed to an asthma trigger, your airways are narrowing, and the air is coming out slower resulting a lowered peak flow rate. Follow the instructions on your AAP.

Red Zone: (0-60 % of your personal best) This indicates a medical emergency, seek emergency help immediately or call 911.

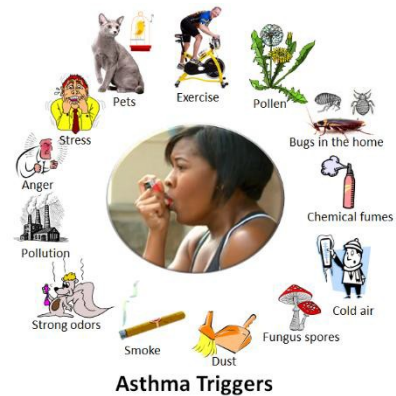
The partnership between doctor and patient is very important for successful asthma management. Asthma education have been shown to improve asthma control, decrease hospital admissions and emergency room use, and improve day-to-day functioning. Asthma education also helps you take an active role in monitoring your symptoms, avoiding triggers, understanding how to use your medicines, and when to go the doctor or emergency room for help with episodes. Together with your doctor and care team, you can take control of your asthma and not let it get in the way of your daily life.

Controlling Environmental Triggers

Asthma triggers are airborne particles in the environment. They can be found indoors and outdoors. These particles are harmless to most people, but for those with asthma, can trigger an attack due to allergic sensitivity. Some triggers are allergens (mold, dust, mice) and can cause allergy. Mice exposure is especially dangerous for children with asthma. Research has shown that children exposed to mice allergen can have an asthma attack.

Some triggers are irritants (tobacco smoke, perfumes, strong odors/fumes) and can irritate the airways causing them to become narrowed (bronchospasm) making it hard to breathe.

Understanding your asthma triggers and avoiding exposure to them is one way to help keep your asthma under control.



There are two types of medicines used to treat asthma; Quick Relief Medicines (Bronchodilators) and Long-Term Control medicines (Anti-inflammatories).

Bronchodilator Medicines are used to open the airways. These medicines are called “rescue or quick relief medicines” due to its rapid relief of asthma symptoms. Rescue medicines should not be used daily. If you need these medicines more than twice a week, when you are otherwise feeling well, this is a sign that your asthma is not under control.

Anti-Inflammatory Medicines are used to decrease inflammation in the airways. These medicines are called “controllers.” They do not relieve symptoms right away like the rescue medicines. They work over a period of weeks to prevent symptoms. These medicines should be used every day as prescribed even when symptoms are not present.

Sources

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