

ASTHMA

Asthma is a chronic disease that affects your airways. Your airways are tubes that carry air in and out of your lungs. If you have asthma, the inside walls of your airways become inflamed and swollen. This can cause wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and trouble breathing, especially early in the morning or at night.



When your airway becomes swollen (left side), you will cough or wheeze as a response

When your asthma symptoms appear, it's called an asthma attack. In a severe asthma attack, the airways can close so much that your vital organs do not get enough oxygen.

Asthma is treated with two kinds of medicines: quick-relief medicines to stop asthma symptoms and long-term control medicines to prevent symptoms.

The key to good asthma control is monitoring your asthma daily and taking the right asthma medication at the right time.

WRITTEN ASTHMA PLAN

Monitoring asthma with a written asthma plan is especially important if you have moderate to severe asthma or you've had serious asthma flare-ups. A written plan can help you:

- Quickly recognize early warning signs of an asthma attack
- Know when to adjust your asthma medications
- Keep tabs on how well your asthma treatment is working
- Know when to call a doctor or when to seek emergency help

Because asthma varies from person to person, you'll need to work with your doctor to develop a plan that's customized for you. While formats vary, most action plans have clear instructions on how to:

- **Use medications.** Your plan should list your asthma medications and tell you when to use them. Medications usually include daily control medications (such as inhaled corticosteroids) and as-needed, quick-relief medications (such as inhaled albuterol).
- **Track your long-term asthma control.** Good overall asthma control is critical to preventing asthma flare-ups.
- **Recognize and treat an asthma attack.** Make sure your written plan has step-by-step instructions for preventing and handling an asthma attack.
- **Know when to seek emergency care.** Some attacks can't be managed at home. Use the action plan to recognize signs of asthma emergency, such as difficulty speaking or straining chest muscles to breathe.
- **Avoid your asthma triggers.** The action plan may have a place to list your asthma triggers and how to avoid them.



Avoid your allergens and take the right medication at the right time to control your asthma, and to minimize the risk of asthma attacks