

INFORM Yourself

ASTHMA

You Did It!

Congratulations on completing the Focused Wellness program! This issue of *Inform Yourself* is meant to remind you of what you learned. You can draw on this information to help you stay on top of your health. You can also share the information with others. Having people around who understand your condition and how to support you can be a big help.



FAST FACTS

About Asthma

During your time in the Focused Wellness program, you learned about asthma and how to manage it. Here are a few quick reminders about the basics:

- Asthma affects breathing by causing airways to narrow and become inflamed.
- When something “**triggers**” your asthma, like dust, cold weather, or exercise, your airways become more inflamed and there is less room for air to get through.
- A “**flare-up**” happens when something triggers your asthma. When you have a flare-up, you can have symptoms that include wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, and pain or tightness in your chest. An asthma flare-up is also called an asthma attack.
- It is important to work with your health care provider to keep your asthma under control. They can work with you to figure out and monitor what triggers your asthma symptoms and can also prescribe medication that can help you.

You can find more about asthma on the American Lung Association’s website at www.lung.org.

Source: American Lung Association

Asthma Medication

Many people with asthma take 2 types of medication. They have different effects. **Controller** medications work over the long term. They are taken daily, even when you don’t have symptoms. **Reliever/rescue** medications act in the short term to open up your airway. It is important to use your controller medication as directed. If you do, you may not need to use your reliever/rescue medication as often. This is because the *controller* medication helps keep your asthma under *control*.



Read and Share

This publication is geared toward adults and parents of children with asthma. But, if your child is old enough to read and understand these articles, please share them!





Asthma Education for You and Your Community

A key part of living with asthma is educating yourself and members of your community. Community members include relatives, teachers, coaches, coworkers, babysitters, and caregivers. Having an informed community can help you feel more secure and supported.

Asthma basics

You can share information about asthma and your triggers with the people in your life and answer their questions. Be sure to explain asthma and how it affects you in terms that the person listening can understand. You can find a lot of information about asthma on our website at www.primewest.org/asthma.

Effects of asthma

Keep track of what triggers your asthma flare-ups. Also pay attention to the warning signs that your asthma may be getting worse. If you can tell when your symptoms are getting worse, you can take steps to avoid an asthma attack. Don't be afraid to tell people what your triggers are and that you might have to sit some things out. If your child has asthma, ask others to pay special attention. Younger

children may not always be able to say how they feel. The more people who are able to spot the early signs of an asthma attack, the better. Warning signs may include shortness of breath, paleness, dark circles under the eyes, or restlessness.

Asthma medication: Controllers and relievers

Always make sure you know what medications you have been prescribed, as well as when, how, and why they should be taken. You should also know which medications are for daily use ("**controller**" medications") and which are for treating asthma attacks ("**reliever**" or "**rescue**" medications). Make sure caregivers and babysitters know, too.

An asthma action plan

Work with your health care provider to develop and maintain an **asthma action plan** to help you understand and manage your asthma. An asthma action plan can include the following:

- Triggers and warning signs
- Information on controller and reliever/rescue medications
- What to do during an asthma attack
- When to seek medical attention

Share your action plan as needed. Making sure others know more about asthma can help put everyone at ease! Be sure to review your action plan each year and make sure it is up to date. You can find more information about action plans on the next page.

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Source: American Lung Association

SMART Therapy

SMART therapy is a newer treatment for asthma. Your provider may recommend this treatment, or you may already be on it.

SMART stands for Single Maintenance and Reliever Therapy. With SMART, you use the same inhaler for **both** your controller and reliever/rescue medications. The single inhaler is used to control **and** treat asthma. Having both medications in one inhaler can simplify asthma management. This can make it easier for you to keep your asthma in check.

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Source: American Lung Association, National Institute of Health



Asthma Triggers

An asthma trigger is something that makes your asthma symptoms worse. There are many common asthma triggers. They include dust mites, animal dander, molds, and pollen. Another common trigger is smoke. This includes smoke from cigarettes (including secondhand smoke), bonfires, and wood stoves.

Remember that triggers aren't always visible. Cold or dry air and changes in weather can also bother people with asthma, as can illnesses like respiratory infections. Anxiety and stress can cause symptoms to get worse. Some people have asthma symptoms during or after exercise. This is called "exercise-induced asthma." Asthma triggers can also come from an unexpected area: medications. Some medications like aspirin and beta blockers can act as triggers.



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Keeping track of the things that seem to lead to an asthma attack and talking about them with your health care provider can help identify your triggers. You and your provider can work together to find ways to decrease your exposure to these triggers or work around them.

Source: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI)



Ready, Set, Action Plan!

An action plan can play an important part in managing asthma. Action plans include goals and best practices for you to follow. This includes taking your medication as directed. Action plans also help you know when you need to ask for help.

Green, yellow, and red—the colors found on stoplights—are often used in action plans. This provides an easy-to-use guide to help you figure out what to do when your symptoms put you in the following color categories:

Green

GO – you can continue what you're doing

Yellow

SLOW – you should use caution, slow down, or possibly call your health care provider

Red

STOP – you should call 911 or your health care provider right away

If you don't have an action plan, you can find one on the PrimeWest Health website. Go to www.primewest.org/asthma and click on *Asthma Action Plan*. You can also get one by calling Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and asking for the Focused Wellness nurse. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.

A sample 'My Asthma Action Plan' form from the American Lung Association. The form is color-coded with green, yellow, and red sections corresponding to the traffic light zones. It includes fields for provider information, patient name, severity classification, asthma triggers, and specific instructions for each zone (Green: Doing Well, Yellow: Caution, Red: Get Help Now!). It also includes a section for quick-relief medication and emergency contact information.

Take your action plan to your health care appointments and work with your provider to keep it up to date. You can read more about action plans on the American Lung Association website at <https://www.lung.org/blog/asthma-action-plan-expert>.

Your Treatment Plan: The Path to Better Health

A treatment plan can help you minimize the effects of asthma and feel your best. If you have a treatment plan, make sure you work with your provider to keep it updated and maintain your progress. If you don't have one, talk to your provider about making one. You can share your treatment plan and other information about your condition with all of your health care providers and caregivers by completing a form giving consent for them to access your health information. Talk with your health care provider to learn more about this.

Treatment plans usually include goals. Goals give you something to work on and can help you measure your progress. Talk about the goals below with your health care provider and ask which ones you should work on.

Goals for all conditions

The following are general health goals that apply no matter what condition you have. Most of them have to do with interactions between you and your health care provider. This is a very important relationship!

- Keep your appointments with your health care provider. You should do this even if you feel fine when it is time for your appointment.
- Ask your provider questions if you don't understand something.
- Take all medications prescribed by your provider. Be sure you take them as directed.
- Talk with your provider about your symptoms and ways to manage them.
- Call your provider if you have problems.
- Work with your provider to develop and maintain an action plan. (Read more about action plans on page 3.)
- Talk with your family and friends about how your condition makes you feel.

- Consider joining a support group for your condition. Asthma camp is a great way for kids and teens to meet others their own age with asthma. PrimeWest Health covers the cost of a qualified summer camp for members who meet eligibility requirements. For more information, call Member Services at **1-866-431-0801** and ask for the Focused Wellness nurse. TTY users call **1-800-627-3529** or **711**. These calls are free.



Goals for asthma

- If you smoke, take steps to quit. We can help! Call Member Services at the number above for more information.
- Know how to correctly use your controller medication, if prescribed.
- Carry a rescue inhaler with you and know when to use it.
- Tell your health care provider if you use your rescue inhaler more than 2 days a week. Also tell your provider if asthma gets in the way of work, home life, or school.
- Keep track of what makes your asthma worse ("triggers") and avoid those things.
- Have your provider check how you use your inhaler at every visit.

Remember that these goals are just examples. Your provider may have other goals for you.



Note: The information in this magazine is not professional medical advice. It is not a substitute for diagnosis or treatment. Do not ignore your health care provider's advice or wait to ask for it because of something you read here. Links to other websites are provided as a resource only. PrimeWest Health does not endorse, recommend, or pay for products or services offered by such sites.

1-866-431-0801 (toll free); TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

သတိ။ ဤတွဲရက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ပါဖုန်းနံပါတ်ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

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請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

ဟ်သျှ်ဟ်သးဘၣ်တက့ၢ်. ဖဲနမ့ၢ်လိၣ်ဘၣ်တၢ်မၤစၤကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒၣ်လံာ် တီလံာ်မိတခါအံၤန့ၣ်,ကိးဘၣ် လိတဲစိနီၣ်ဂံၢ်လၢထးအံၤန့ၣ်တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

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Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda (afcelinta) qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

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