Infection Prevention
If you have asthma, you want to do everything you can to avoid getting an upper respiratory infection like a cold or the flu. Infections like these are worse if you have asthma, and they can lead to complications like pneumonia. Some things you can do to stay healthy are listed below. Talk with your health care provider about which are right for you. They may have other suggestions, too.

Keep yourself healthy and prevent infections
- Talk with your provider about getting a pneumococcal vaccine. Also be sure to ask about getting a flu vaccine each fall.
- Try to avoid large crowds, especially during flu season, which can last until May.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm water and soap. Use hand sanitizer if you can’t find a place to wash your hands.
- Ask friends and family to reschedule visits if they are ill.

Read. Share. Learn.
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, then please share them!

Avoid Triggers and Prevent Flare-Ups
Learning what you can do to keep your symptoms under control and prevent flare-ups (times when your symptoms get worse) is important. One thing you’ll want to do is identify things that “trigger” your symptoms. Triggers can be things that irritate your airways or things you are allergic to. Once you have identified your triggers, try and avoid them when you can. The following are common triggers:
- Smoke, including tobacco, secondhand smoke, and smoke from bonfires or wood-burning stoves
- Mold
- Pollen
- Air pollutants
- Animal dander
- Carpeting
- Cold weather
- Illnesses (especially colds, flu, and bronchitis)

Exercise is another trigger, but this one shouldn’t be avoided as long as you plan ahead. For more information about exercise and asthma, go to page 2.

In addition to avoiding triggers, there are other things you can do to prevent flare-ups.
- Get regular checkups. Read about why this is important on page 5.
- Keep track of your symptoms and talk to your provider about them. The article on page 3 tells you what you should track.
- Follow your asthma action plan. Go to page 5 for more information.
- Take your medications. Follow your provider’s instructions about what to take and when.

“Asthma Triggers” on page 4 is a handy guide to help you remember possible triggers and how to avoid them.

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
What’s Your Type?
Did you know there are 2 types of asthma? One is allergic asthma and the other is non-allergic asthma. Allergic asthma means your symptoms are caused by something you are allergic to (an allergen). Allergens include mold, pollen, and pet dander. Non-allergic asthma means your symptoms are not triggered by allergens. They are triggered by things like exercise, weather, and stress. It is important to know what type of asthma you have so you can tailor your asthma management and treatment. If you don’t know your “type,” talk to your provider.

Source: American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

Exercising with Asthma
Exercise is important for everyone. That includes people with asthma! Some people with asthma have something called “exercise-induced asthma.” This is when asthma symptoms flare up during or right after exercise. Luckily, there are ways you can prevent or reduce this.

Tips to prevent or reduce exercise-induced asthma
• Use your quick-relief medication 15 – 30 minutes before exercise.
• Warm up before you exercise. Ideas include walking and stretching.
• Avoid your asthma triggers. For example, if cold weather triggers symptoms, exercise inside when it’s cold. The same is true for hot days and days with high pollen counts.

Ask your provider about what exercise is right for you. Let them know if you need to use your quick-relief medication often during or after exercise. Your provider may have some suggestions.

Sources: American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Medication for the Long and Short Term
You may be prescribed medication for your asthma. There are 2 general kinds of medication. One is long-term control medication and the other is quick-relief medication.

You take long-term control medication every day to prevent symptoms. The goal is to help you have fewer and milder flare-ups. Don’t stop taking long-term control medication even if you feel okay. Your symptoms may return or get worse if you do.

You take quick-relief medication to relieve symptoms. It acts quickly to relax tight muscles around your airways. You should take your quick-relief medication when you first notice asthma symptoms. Carry your quick-relief medication with you at all times in case you need it. If you need to use it more than 2 days a week, talk to your health care provider.

It’s important to follow the directions your provider gives you about taking your medications. If you have questions, ask!

Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
Where There’s Smoke, There’s an Asthma Trigger
Smoke and secondhand smoke from cigarettes, pipes, and cigars is bad for everyone. It’s especially bad for people with asthma. It can trigger asthma attacks and damage your airways and the small air sacs in your lungs (alveoli).

If you smoke—quit!

• Talk to your health care provider. They can let you know about services such as counseling and over-the-counter (OTC) products like nicotine replacement patches, gum, and lozenges to help you quit. Your health care provider can write you prescriptions for these OTC products so PrimeWest Health will cover the cost.

• Visit [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov). You can find tools and tips, talk or chat with an expert, and build a quit plan.

• Get information on how to quit through the PrimeWest Health Secure Member Site. <Go to [www.primewest.org/secure-member-site](http://www.primewest.org/secure-member-site) and log in. Click Access Wellness in the Quick Links menu. Next, click My Health>Edit and check the box for “Quitting Tobacco.” Click Save. (Your changes will be saved for the next time you log in to your account.) Then, click Tobacco at the top of the screen.

If people around you smoke—ask them not to!

• Don’t let people smoke inside your house. Even if you’re not home to breathe in the immediate effects, the smoke still lingers in the air. It gets absorbed into upholstery, clothing, and carpeting.

• Don’t let anyone smoke in your car. Opening a window doesn’t help!

If you have asthma, stay away from smoke! Get help to quit and ask people not to smoke around you.

Monitor Your Asthma
Self-monitoring means paying attention to your asthma symptoms. Doing this helps you know when your asthma is getting worse and may help you identify what makes it worse. According to the American Lung Association, there are four categories of symptoms that you should monitor.

1. **Daytime Symptoms**
   - How often do you experience symptoms during the day? What are your symptoms? What were you doing when they started?

2. **Nighttime Symptoms**
   - How often do you wake up with symptoms at night? What are the symptoms?

3. **Rescue Inhaler Use**
   - How often do you need to use your rescue inhaler?

4. **Activity Level**
   - How well are you able to do normal activities like walking or climbing stairs?

Keeping a journal of your symptoms can help you monitor your asthma. Having the information written down makes it easier to share with your provider. Your provider might also suggest you use a peak flow meter to help monitor your symptoms. This tool measures how well air moves out of your lungs.

Source: American Lung Association

---

Care Coordination and Case Management: We’re Here for You
PrimeWest Health provides Care Coordination and Case Management programs to help keep members healthy. These programs let us work with you and your health care providers to make sure you get the services you need. Your care coordinator or case manager can do the following:

• Help you when you have questions about your health care or prescriptions
• Schedule medical appointments as needed
• Promote good health practices that may prevent problems
• Help arrange services you need to stay safe and healthy at home

PrimeWest Health encourages you to take advantage of these programs. Let your care coordinator or case manager know when and how they can help you get the care and services you need. If you do not know who your care coordinator or case manager is, call one of the following:

• Member Services at 1-866-431-0801
• Jennifer at 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5342
• TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711.

These calls are free.
Asthma Triggers

Triggers are things that make your asthma worse. Some triggers are things you are allergic to and some just irritate your airways. You can reduce how often your asthma flares up by reducing exposure to your triggers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Triggers</th>
<th>What you can do to reduce your triggers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Cigarette Smoke**                          | - Do not allow smoking in your home, car, or around you.  
| Tobacco smoke can make asthma worse.         | - If you smoke, ask your health care provider for ways to help you quit.  
|                                                | - Ask family members to quit, too.  
|                                                | - Ask your health care provider for a referral to a quit smoking program, or call the US Network of Quitlines: **800-QUIT-NOW (800-784-8669)**. |
| **Colds, Flu, Bronchitis**                    | - Wash your hands often.  
| When you’re sick, your asthma is more likely to flare up. | - Don’t touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.  
|                                                | - Get a flu shot every year, preferably in the fall.  
|                                                | - Avoid contact with people who have colds. |
| **Dust Mites**                                | - Get special dust mite-proof covers for your pillows and mattresses.  
| These tiny bugs live in cloth, carpet, and bedding and are too small to see with the naked eye. | - Wash sheets and blankets in hot water every week.  
|                                                | - Wash stuffed animals frequently and dry completely.  
|                                                | - Avoid having carpeting, if you can.  
|                                                | - Vacuum carpet weekly with a HEPA vacuum cleaner. |
| **Pollen & Outdoor Air Pollution**            | - Try to keep your windows closed during pollen season and when mold counts are high.  
| Some people are allergic to molds or pollen from trees, grass, and weeds. | - Plan to do indoor activities on high pollen days.  
|                                                | - Ask your health care provider about taking medicine during allergy season.  
|                                                | - Get daily air quality forecasts at [www.airnow.gov](http://www.airnow.gov). |
| **Animals**                                   | - Keep pets with fur or feathers out of your home.  
| Some people are allergic to skin flakes (dander), urine, or saliva from animals and birds. | - If you can’t keep a pet outdoors, then keep the pet out of your bedroom, and keep the bedroom door closed. |
|                                                | - Keep pets off upholstered furniture and away from stuffed toys.  
|                                                | - Wash your hands after petting or playing with pets. |
| **Mice, Rats, and Cockroaches**               | - Do not leave food or garbage uncovered.  
| Some people are allergic to the droppings from these pests. | - Clean up spills and food crumbs right away.  
|                                                | - Store food in airtight containers.  
|                                                | - Store cooking grease in the refrigerator.  
|                                                | - Keep food out of the bedroom. |
| **Indoor Mold**                               | - Fix leaking faucets, pipes, or other sources of water.  
| This can be a trigger if your home has high moisture. | - Clean moldy surfaces with hot water and soap.  
|                                                | - Use a dehumidifier in the basement if it is damp and smelly. |
| **Wood Smoke, Strong Odors, and Sprays**      | - Avoid strong odors and sprays, like perfume, powders, hair spray, paints, incense, cleaning products, candles, and new carpeting.  
| These can reduce air quality and irritate airways. | - Avoid inhaling smoke from burning wood. |
| **Exercise or Sports**                        | - Take your rescue medicine before sports or exercise to prevent symptoms if directed by your health care provider.  
| These can trigger an asthma attack for some people. | - Warm up / cool down for 5-10 minutes before and after sports or exercise. |
| **Other Triggers**                            | - Cover your nose and mouth with a scarf when it gets cold.  
| Cold air, changes in weather, and strong emotions can set off an asthma attack! | - Sometimes laughing or crying can be a trigger.  
|                                                | - Some medicines and foods can trigger asthma. |
Working with Your Provider

It’s important to have regular asthma checkups with your health care provider. You can work together to develop a treatment plan. The goal of the plan is to make sure your asthma is managed as well as possible, in the best way possible. At your appointments, you can review the symptoms and patterns you recorded in your asthma journal (go to page 3). You’ll also want to talk about your triggers, medications, and any changes in your health or environment. Your provider may want to adjust your treatment based on this information.

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, in addition to your regular checkups, you should visit your provider if any of the following things happen:
- You are limiting normal activities and missing school or work.
- You have to use your quick-relief inhaler more than two days a week.
- Your asthma medicines do not seem to work well anymore.
- Your peak flow number is low or varies a lot from day to day.
- Your symptoms occur more often, are more severe, or cause you to lose sleep.

Working with your provider is important. Keep an open line of communication, schedule and attend regular appointments, and follow your treatment plan.


Have an Action Plan

An action plan can help you manage your asthma and should be part of your treatment plan. Your action plan can include goals and best practices for you to follow. It can also help you know when you need to ask for help. Complete your action plan with your health care provider. Then, make sure you put your action plan somewhere that is easy to access. If your child has asthma, make sure the school has a copy of the action plan.

"A written asthma action plan is essential to treatment of asthma. Knowing when and how to use a peak flow meter, inhaler, or nebulizer can prevent flare-ups, keep you healthy, and even prevent death. Following your treatment plan will improve breathing and allow you to participate in physical activities at school, work, and home."

Susan Paulson, MD, PrimeWest Health Chief Senior Medical Director

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 Jennifer at 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5342. The call is free.
Health and wellness or prevention information

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

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

Please note, if you need free assistance interpreting this document, please call the above number.

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 tsb ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

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

告知您。如果您需要免费协助翻译此文件，请拨打上述电话号码。

Hubachiisa. Dokumentii kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenneem 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.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.
Civil Rights Notice

Discrimination is against the law. PrimeWest Health does not discriminate on the basis of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- creed
- religion
- sexual orientation
- public assistance status
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- marital status
- political beliefs
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information

You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You can file a complaint and ask for help filing a complaint in person or by mail, phone, fax, or email at:

Rebecca Fuller, Civil Rights Coordinator
PrimeWest Health
3905 Dakota St
Alexandria, MN 56308
Toll Free: 1-866-431-0801
TTY: 1-800-627-3529 or 711
Fax: 1-320-762-8750
Email: rebecca.fuller@primewest.org

Auxiliary Aids and Services: PrimeWest Health provides auxiliary aids and services, like qualified interpreters or information in accessible formats, free of charge and in a timely manner to ensure an equal opportunity to participate in our health care programs. **Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711. The call is free.**

Language Assistance Services: PrimeWest Health provides translated documents and spoken language interpreting, free of charge and in a timely manner, when language assistance services are necessary to ensure limited English speakers have meaningful access to our information and services. **Contact PrimeWest Health at memberservices@primewest.org, or call Member Services at 1-866-431-0801 or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711. The call is free.**

Civil Rights Complaints
You have the right to file a discrimination complaint if you believe you were treated in a discriminatory way by PrimeWest Health. You may also contact any of the following agencies directly to file a discrimination complaint.
### U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights (OCR)

You have the right to file a complaint with the OCR, a federal agency, if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- age
- disability
- sex
- religion (in some cases)

Contact the OCR directly to file a complaint:

Office for Civil Rights  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Midwest Region  
233 N. Michigan Avenue, Suite 240  
Chicago, IL 60601  
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019  
TDD Toll-free: 800-537-7697  
Email: ocrmail@hhs.gov

### Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MDHR)

In Minnesota, you have the right to file a complaint with the MDHR if you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion
- creed
- sex
- sexual orientation
- marital status
- public assistance status
- disability

Contact the MDHR directly to file a complaint:

Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
540 Fairview Avenue North, Suite 201  
St. Paul, MN 55104  
651-539-1100 (voice)  
800-657-3704 (toll-free)  
711 or 800-627-3529 (MN Relay)  
651-296-9042 (fax)  
Info.MDHR@state.mn.us (email)

### Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS)

You have the right to file a complaint with DHS if you believe you have been discriminated against in our health care programs because of any of the following:

- race
- color
- national origin
- religion (in some cases)
- age
- disability (including physical or mental impairment)
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
Complaints must be in writing and filed within 180 days of the date you discovered the alleged discrimination. The complaint must contain your name and address and describe the discrimination you are complaining about. We will review it and notify you in writing about whether we have authority to investigate. If we do, we will investigate the complaint.

DHS will notify you in writing of the investigation’s outcome. You have the right to appeal if you disagree with the decision. To appeal, you must send a written request to have DHS review the investigation outcome. Be brief and state why you disagree with the decision. Include additional information you think is important.

If you file a complaint in this way, the people who work for the agency named in the complaint cannot retaliate against you. This means they cannot punish you in any way for filing a complaint. Filing a complaint in this way does not stop you from seeking out other legal or administrative actions.

Contact DHS directly to file a discrimination complaint:
   Civil Rights Coordinator
   Minnesota Department of Human Services
   Equal Opportunity and Access Division
   P.O. Box 64997
   St. Paul, MN 55164-0997
   651-431-3040 (voice) or use your preferred relay service

American Indians can continue or begin to use tribal and Indian Health Services (IHS) clinics. We will not require prior approval or impose any conditions for you to get services at these clinics. For elders age 65 years and older this includes Elderly Waiver (EW) services accessed through the tribe. If a doctor or other provider in a tribal or IHS clinic refers you to a provider in our network, we will not require you to see your primary care provider prior to the referral.