People with chronic conditions may be at higher risk for COVID-19 and be more likely to get very sick. Talk to your provider about staying healthy and getting vaccinated. You can also find resources at www.primewest.org.

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, please share them!

Peak Flow Testing
A Peak Expiratory Flow Rate (PEFR) test is often called a “peak flow” test. It is a breathing test that measures how fast you can exhale. You do this test at home and record your results to find patterns that mean your breathing is worsening—even before you notice symptoms. Your provider will help you incorporate peak flow testing into your treatment and action plans.

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.

Let your care coordinator or case manager know when and how they can help. If you do not know who your care coordinator or case manager is, call one of the following:
- Jennifer at 1-888-588-4420 ext. 5342
- Member Services at 1-866-431-0801
- TTY users call 1-800-627-3529 or 711

These calls are free.

Your Health Care Provider: An Important Part of Your Team
Work with your provider to develop a treatment plan. The plan can include what medications to take and when, how to manage your symptoms, and how and when to use your peak flow meter. It should also include an action plan (see below).

In addition, your treatment plan should include how often you should see your provider. Regular follow-up can help keep your asthma from getting worse. Your provider can monitor your symptoms and see how well your treatment plan is working. If you don’t understand the plan, ask questions. If you don’t feel you can follow it, say so. Together, you can come up with a treatment plan that manages your symptoms and takes into account your lifestyle and preferences.

An Asthma Action Plan
An asthma action plan tells you what to do based on your symptoms and peak flow testing results. It also includes what to do in an emergency. This information is important for both children and the adults who care for them. Your child’s school nurse should have a copy of their asthma action plan so it can be followed during school hours. You can find an action plan on our website at www.primewest.org/asthma. Also, fill out a medication permission form and have it on file at the school. This allows the school to give your child the medication they need.

“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
What is asthma?
Asthma is a condition where a person's airways swell up when exposed to certain triggers. There is no cure for asthma, but it is treatable.

What is an asthma attack?
During an asthma attack, swelling narrows the airways, making it hard to breathe. This causes wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath, and, sometimes, chest pain. An attack can last anywhere from a few minutes to a few days and can range from mild to life threatening.

What are triggers?
Triggers are things that make your asthma worse. It is important to know your triggers. Avoiding them can help prevent an asthma attack. Things that can trigger asthma include the following:
- Changes in weather (cold air or changes in humidity)
- Dust mites, pollen, and mold
- Chemicals
- Exercise
- Anxiety, stress, and other strong emotions
- Smoking and secondhand smoke
- Pollution
- Upper respiratory infections

How is an asthma attack treated?
If you have asthma, it is important to know how to prevent or manage an attack. Tips include the following:
- Get away from the trigger
- Sit down and loosen any tight clothing
- Try to remain calm. Panicking only makes it worse.
- Use your rescue inhaler (use a spacer for children)
- Take slow, steady breaths
- Seek emergency care if symptoms don't get better after a few minutes or if they get worse

Source: MedlinePlus, A.D.A.M. Medical Encyclopedia

Summer Allergens: A Source of Asthma Triggers
Summer allergens may cause asthma flare-ups. Heat waves can lead to poor air quality, which can be an asthma trigger. Air quality alerts are announced on TV and radio and online. You can also keep track of air quality online by entering your zip code at www.airnow.gov. Or you can download a free app at www.airvisual.com/air-quality-app or https://plumelabs.com/en/air. Pay attention to air quality and try to stay indoors when it is bad to help prevent flare-ups. Summer thunderstorms come with high winds that can send pollen, mold, and other allergens into the air, so keep an eye on the weather, too. Other possible asthma triggers are chemicals in things like bug repellents, chlorinated pools, and some sunscreens. Smoke from outdoor burning or forest fires can also cause issues. And ragweed and pollen become problematic as summer comes to a close and fall begins.

Keep track of what causes your asthma to flare up and work to avoid these things. Talk to your provider about seasonal triggers and how to manage them.

Tips for exercising with asthma include the following:
- Exercise indoors if the air outside is cold and dry or if there is a high level of pollen or pollution.
- If you exercise outside, breathe through your nose or wear a scarf or mask over your mouth to warm the air as you breathe.
- Do warm-up and cool-down exercises to ease your lungs in to and out of the activity.
- If your child has asthma, make sure the school has their asthma action plan on hand. Fill out a medication permission form and have it on file at the school. This allows the school to give your child the medication they need.
- Let your child know it is okay to stop an activity if they are having a hard time breathing. Reassure your child that the teacher or coach will understand.

Talk to your provider about making physical activity a part of your treatment plan!
Medication to Help You Manage

You may need medication to help control your asthma. There are 2 main types you may be prescribed. Control or long-acting medications need to be taken every day, even when you aren’t having symptoms. Don’t stop taking this medication without talking to your provider. Quick-acting or rescue medications are used before exercise to help avoid an asthma attack. This type of medication can also be used to quickly relax your airways during an asthma attack. Keep your rescue medication with you at all times. An asthma attack can happen even when you aren’t expecting it! Tell your provider if you need to use your rescue medication more often than normal. And be sure to speak up if it isn’t relieving your symptoms as well as it used to.

Protect Your Child from Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is especially hard on kids with asthma. To help keep your child away from secondhand smoke, don’t take them to places where people smoke. Don’t let anyone smoke in your home or car and make sure anyone who takes care of your child doesn’t smoke while your child is there. Talk with your child about the dangers of smoking and secondhand smoke, and the increased danger they pose to people with asthma.

If you smoke, make a change for yourself and for your child…QUIT! Help is available.

- **Talk to your health care provider.** They can tell you about services like counseling and over-the-counter (OTC) products, like nicotine replacement patches, gum, and lozenges.
- **Take advantage of the WebMD resources on our Secure Member Site.** Go to [www.primewest.org/secure-member-site](http://www.primewest.org/secure-member-site) and log in or create an account. Click Access Wellness from 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.
- **Use other online resources.** There are lots of good websites to help you get started or keep you motivated. One example is [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov). This site provides tips, tools, and an online chat feature.

Asthma and Your Mental Health

People with asthma are 2 times as likely to develop depression, anxiety, or other mood disorders. This is true for 2 main reasons.

1. Asthma, especially when it is poorly controlled, is stressful and makes staying active hard. Inactivity and long periods of stress can lead to anxiety and depression.
2. The inflammation associated with asthma can lead to changes to your brain. These changes may lead to depression.

Signs of depression include withdrawing from people and activities, having trouble sleeping, or feeling sad or hopeless for a prolonged time. Talk to your provider if you have any of these symptoms. Depression can be treated. The sooner you talk to your provider, the sooner treatment can start.

Source: WebMD

Good Health for Everyone

Managing life with asthma can be challenging, but you don’t have to manage it alone. Your parents, spouse or partner, and friends are just a few examples of people who can help with your care. And while they’re helping you, you can help them by letting them know that their good health is important to you. Encourage them to take care of themselves and see their primary care provider regularly. Let them know it’s okay to take a break or join a caregivers’ support group. Your local Social/Human/Family Services agency is a good source of information about these groups. There are also many online support groups and resources such as the Caregiver Action Network (CAN). Their website is [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org).
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.

ссъртак: หัวข้อถ้าคุณต้องการความช่วยเหลือในภาษาอื่น โปรดติดต่อที่เบอร์ด้านบน

Мақлүәт: Ыәк бәләмә тәхәрәтчәләр беәйәлә булаан булаар. Һәлә нәнә өүрәхәйләр

ل第二种语言的翻译：أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

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.

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

โปรดเรียกลง. คุณสามารถร้องขอความช่วยเหลือในภาษาอื่นได้โดยติดต่อที่เบอร์ด้านบน

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenneam 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 (afeelinta) 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

**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 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.**

**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 (toll free) or TTY 1-800-627-3529 or 711.**

**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 contact any of the following four 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:

Director
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Office for Civil Rights
200 Independence Avenue SW
Room 515F
HHH Building
Washington, DC 20201
Customer Response Center: Toll-free: 800-368-1019
TDD 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 believe 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
- 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

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. After we get your complaint, 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 the outcome 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

PrimeWest Health Complaint Notice
You have the right to file a complaint with PrimeWest Health if you believe you have been discriminated against because of any of the following:
- medical condition
- health status
- receipt of health care services
- claims experience
- medical history
- genetic information
- disability (including mental or physical impairment)
- marital status
- age
- sex (including sex stereotypes and gender identity)
- sexual orientation
- national origin
- race
- color
- religion
- creed
- public assistance status
- political beliefs

You can file a complaint and ask for help in 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

American Indian Health Statement
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.