Using Your Asthma Action Plan to Help Manage Your Asthma

Together, you and your doctor decide how to manage your asthma care. Be sure you know:

- When and how to take your medicines.
- What things trigger your asthma and how to avoid those triggers when possible.
- When to call your doctor and what to do in an emergency.

Goals of Asthma Care

The symptoms of asthma can change from day to day or month to month. You can feel fine one minute and wheeze the next. This change can be frustrating.

The goal of a good asthma management plan is to help you manage your asthma. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) guidelines for asthma care recommend that everyone with asthma have a management plan that helps them:

- Have few or no asthma symptoms during the day and night.
- Reduce asthma flare-ups and visits to the emergency room (ER) or hospital.
- Have no limits on activities—no school or work missed.
- Use a quick-relief (rescue) inhaler less often.
- Have little or no bad effects from your medicines.

Did You Know?

Asthma is serious! It does NOT go away when your symptoms go away. It CANNOT be cured but it CAN be managed and you CAN enjoy an active life with better asthma control.

Remember: When you have asthma, you have it all the time, even when you don’t have symptoms.
Reminder About Asthma Medicines

- **Controller medicines** – take them every day, or as directed by your doctor, to improve long-term asthma control and help prevent asthma symptoms like cough and wheezing.

- **Quick-relief (rescue) medicines** – use these at the FIRST sign of asthma symptoms to help provide short-term relief.

Don’t Let Smoke Trigger Your Asthma

Smoke irritates the lungs and can trigger an asthma flare-up.
- If you smoke, stop.
- Don’t let other people smoke in your home.
- Stay out of smoke-filled areas.
- Don’t use wood-burning stoves or fireplaces.

Staying out of the Emergency Room

For someone with asthma, going to the ER for an asthma flare-up may seem normal. It isn’t! Your asthma can be managed so that you may not need to go to the ER as often or at all.

- Work with your doctor to develop an Asthma Action Plan, then follow it.
- Take your controller medicine every day or as directed by your doctor.
- Avoid your asthma triggers when possible.
- Talk to your doctor about what to do in an emergency.

Need More Information?

The following is a list of asthma resources that can provide you with more information on managing your asthma.

**Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America**
1233 20th Street NW, Suite 402
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: 800-727-8462
www.aafa.org

**Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics**
2751 Prosperity Avenue, Suite 150
Fairfax, VA 22031
Phone: 800-878-4403
www.aanma.org

**American Lung Association**
61 Broadway, 6th Floor
New York, NY 10006
Phone: 800-586-4872
www.lungusa.org

**National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute**
P. O. Box 30105
Bethesda, MD 20824-0105
Phone: 301-592-8573
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

REMINDER: If you use your quick-relief (rescue) medicine more than twice a week, or wake up at night more than twice a month due to asthma symptoms, talk to your doctor. Your asthma may not be controlled as well as it could be.