

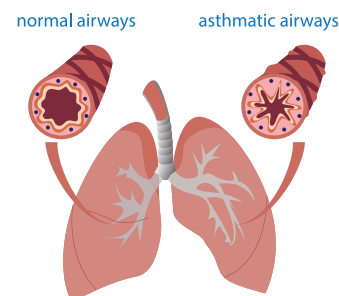
Asthma Basics

Signs and symptoms

Asthma is a disease of the lungs that makes it hard for you to breathe.

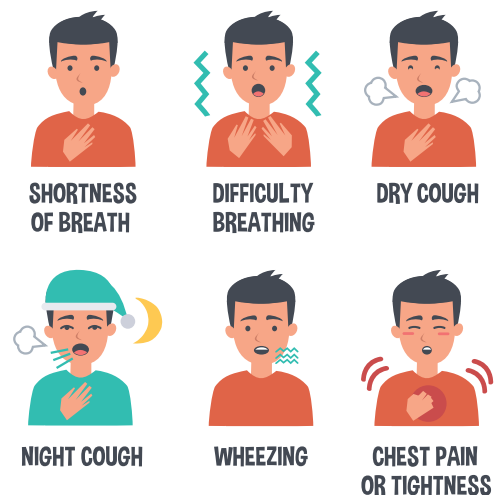
When you have an asthma “attack,” “flare-up” or “episode,” the airways in your lungs narrow.

The muscles around the airways get tight and swell up. The lungs may form a lot of stick mucus, which clogs the airways and makes it difficult to breathe. Sometimes you can tell that a flare-up is on the way. When you feel these signs and symptoms coming on you can treat them with your quick-relief medication.



Common signs and symptoms of asthma:

- Coughing
- Feeling tired
- Wheezing
- Tummy aches
- Increased heart rate
- Headaches
- Sneezing
- Shortness of breath
- Watery eyes
- Scratchy throat
- Runny nose
- Chest tightness
- Chest or neck pulled in
- Shoulders hunched over



You may go for weeks, months or even years with no warning signs and then have an episode of coughing, wheezing and chest tightness.

Even when you are not having symptoms, you still have asthma — you are not cured. So, continue taking your medications, avoid triggers and visit your doctor regularly.

Information provided by Nemours Children's Specialty Care, Jacksonville • Division of Allergy/Immunology/Pulmonology



A collaborative program for children of

Asthma medications: Controller and Quick-Relief

Controller medication:

This medicine should be taken **EVERY DAY**. It reduces inflammation and swelling in your airways. You **MUST** take your controller medicine every day even if you feel well.

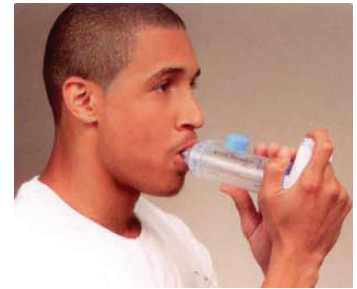
Quick-relief medication:

This medicine opens up your airways and should be used **AS NEEDED**. It is called "quick relief" because it should help you breathe better within 15-20 minutes after taking it. Some common names of this medication include: ProAir, Ventolin, Albuterol, Proventil and Xopenex.

The relief should last four or more hours

If relief is **NOT** felt within 15-20 minutes after taking it, call your doctor or go to the Emergency Department (see your *Asthma Action Plan* – **RED ZONE**)

If the relief does **NOT** last for four hours, call your doctor (see your *Asthma Action Plan* – **YELLOW ZONE**)



Inhaler with spacer



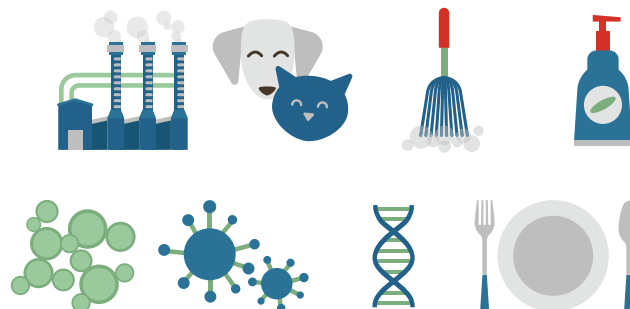
Diskus

Asthma triggers

Asthma triggers cause your signs and symptoms to flare up.

Asthma triggers are different for everyone. You should identify things that affect your asthma and find ways to avoid them, if possible. Common triggers include:

- Common colds
- Certain foods
- Cigarette/cigar smoke
- Animal dander
- Roaches
- Weather changes
- Dust/dust mites
- Mold
- Cleaning/chemical smells
- Pollen
- Exercise
- Aerosol sprays



What should you do?

Avoid. Reduce. Prepare. React.

If you cannot avoid your triggers, at least minimize your exposure and prepare yourself. Use your quick-relief medication before or soon after your exposure. For example, if you have a reaction to your friend's cat, use your medication before you go to their house, or take it with you to their house. And make sure to wash your hands after touching the animal.

Asthma devices

UNDER 5 YEARS OLD

Nebulizer with Mask

1. Use mask – **ALWAYS**
2. **DO NOT** blow treatment into child's face. This is not effective.

Note: Treatment is complete when all liquid is gone from the nebulizer cup.

3. This treatment should last 10 – 15 minutes

MDI with Mask

Use **spacer with mask – ALWAYS.**

1. Apply the face mask to the child's face so the nose and mouth are covered.
2. Push the inhaler canister once so the medication will go into the chamber while keeping the mask firmly in place.
3. Keep the mask in place and count 6 breaths. (Watch the flap on the spacer to confirm inhaled breath.)



Inhaler spacer with mask

5 YEARS AND OLDER

Nebulizer with Mouthpiece

1. Use mouthpiece unless child is **UNABLE** to perform task.

MDI

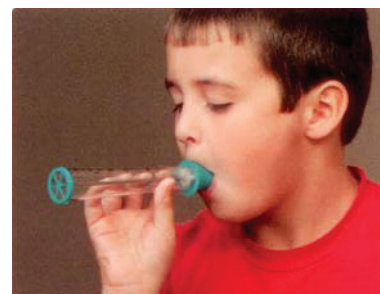
Use **spacer** device to improve the delivery of the inhaled medication.

MDI with mouthpiece and spacer

1. Make sure cap is removed from inhaler and spacer
2. Attach the inhaler
3. Blow all your air out
4. Place lips tightly around the mouthpiece
5. Give inhaler 1 push to get medicine into spacer
6. Breathe in slowly 5 to 10 seconds. (If you hear a whistle sound, you breathed in too quickly)
7. Wait 1 minute between each puff and repeat

Peak flow meter

1. Recommended for children five years of age and older.
2. Please talk with your doctor, to discuss this option.



Peak flow meter

Asthma Action Plan/Asthma Diary

Your **ASTHMA ACTION PLAN** is a personalized guide to help you manage your asthma.

Your doctor will fill out the plan and give it to you when you leave the hospital so you will know what steps to take when you have signs and symptoms of asthma.

GREEN ZONE: Use your daily controller medication (as prescribed)

YELLOW ZONE: Use your quick-relief medication as instructed by your plan

RED ZONE: See your physician or go to the Emergency Department

Use an **ASTHMA DIARY** every day to write down your asthma signs and symptoms and when you use quick-relief medication to treat them. Also include when you use your daily controller.

It's important that you write down this information every day at the time it occurs. The diary helps you and your doctor see how your asthma responded when the weather changed or when you were exposed to other triggers.

Following your Asthma Action Plan and keeping an Asthma Diary can help you and your doctor better manage your asthma.