

## Asthma

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that makes breathing difficult. During an episode of asthma the lining of the airways or bronchial tubes become inflamed and swollen. Although asthma cannot be cured, its symptoms can be controlled with the help of your doctor and a manageable treatment plan.

Typical symptoms of asthma include any of the following symptoms; shortness of breath, tightness in the chest, wheezing, and coughing. Some common triggers of asthma include:

1. Infections - colds or sinus infections.
2. Exposure to allergens such as pollen, animal dander, and dust mites.
3. Exposure to irritants such as smoke, chemical fumes and strong odors.
4. Changes in weather or temperature.
5. Drugs such as aspirin or advil can bring on an attack, also some blood pressure medications. So it's important to always let your doctor know about any medication you are taking.
6. Exercise can also induce asthma symptoms during or immediately following activity.

Managing your asthma is most important to ensure you lead a normal and healthy life. Know your asthma triggers and ways to avoid them. Watch for early warning signs of an episode so you can begin treatment quickly. Get a yearly flu shot.

Two kinds of medicines frequently prescribed to treat asthma are bronchodilators and anti-inflammatory agents.

The bronchodilator prescribed for you is \_\_\_\_\_ it is to be used every 4-6 hours as needed to relieve acute asthma symptoms. Notify us if you are needing to use this medication more than 4 times a day, are needing it more frequently than every 4 hours, or if it is not giving you any relief. This medication is for acute asthma only - not to be used routinely. Overuse of this medication can make your asthma worse.

The anti-inflammatory medication you will use is \_\_\_\_\_ it is to be used \_\_\_\_\_ to maintain and control your asthma. It is important that you use this medication regularly and NO NOT skip any doses. Rinse your mouth after each use. Regular use of this medication will improve your asthma, though the effects take weeks to months to notice.

You will also need to monitor your peak flow on a regular basis and especially close if you feel you are developing an infection.

Your peak flow should be \_\_\_\_\_ if it drops below \_\_\_\_\_ use your bronchodilator \_\_\_\_\_. If it drops below \_\_\_\_\_ or you are waking at night short of breath you need to contact our office to go to the emergency department. In a severe attack you may also need to take the following medication \_\_\_\_\_.