

About Your Asthma Action Plan



It's important to share your Asthma Action Plan with caregivers, family members, supervisors, and other coworkers. If you don't have a plan or it's not up-to-date, talk with your healthcare provider as soon as possible. Your Asthma Action Plan should be updated during each visit with your healthcare provider, or at least every year.

What's an Asthma Action Plan?

This plan describes how to manage your asthma. It includes information about your symptoms and medicines. It also includes instructions about managing your asthma symptoms and when to call your healthcare provider.

Your Asthma Action Plan should include the following.

Medicines

Include instructions about when to take your medicines. This will be based on your symptoms or your peak flow readings. It may also be based on specific directions from your healthcare provider. It's important to talk with your provider to be sure you know how to use all your medicines correctly. These medicines include:

- Long-term control (maintenance) medicine. These medicines work to reduce airway swelling and inflammation. They can also help relax muscles around your airways. They help prevent symptoms and asthma flare-ups. But they don't stop a flare-up once it has started. Take these medicines as scheduled.
- Quick-relief (rescue) medicine. These medicines are fast-acting. They will give you quick relief when your symptoms begin. They relax and open your airways. Always carry this medicine with you.
- Inhaled corticosteroids. These medicines are often taken by people with chronic symptoms. They are sometimes taken regularly, but can also be used as needed. They are given to decrease inflammation in the lungs, which helps open your airways. They are inhaled right into the lungs.
- Oral steroids. If your symptoms are severe enough, you may need to take steroids by mouth as directed by your healthcare provider.

Asthma symptoms and triggers

Your symptoms will tell you what zone you're in (green, yellow, or red) based on the information listed on your Asthma Action Plan.

- Asthma symptoms. List your asthma symptoms and what to do if they occur. Add specific instructions about your medicines. This includes the name, dose, how to take them, and how often. Add any other important details about why to take them.
- Triggers. List any triggers, irritants, or allergens that make your asthma worse. Stay away from things that may trigger your asthma symptoms.

Peak-flow meter

Ask your healthcare provider to teach you how to find your personal best for peak flow readings. Peak flow readings tell you what zone you're in based on information listed on your Asthma Action Plan.

- Green Zone: Go. Peak flow reading that is 80% to 100% of your personal best.
- Yellow Zone: Caution. Peak flow reading that is 50% to 79% of your personal best.

- Red Zone: Danger. Peak flow reading that is less than 50% of your personal best.

Physical activity

List any special instructions for physical activities, including:

- Medicine. List the medicine's name and how much you should take before doing any physical activities or exercise.
- Activities. List any physical activities that may trigger your asthma symptoms.
- Special safety measures and instructions. List any special safety steps to take. This may include wearing a scarf or ski mask on cold days. Or it may include not exercising outdoors when there are high levels of pollen, mold, or other air irritants. Include any other directions from your healthcare provider.

Emergency information

Be sure to include:

- Medical contact information. List the name and phone number of your healthcare provider and your emergency contacts.
- When to call the healthcare provider. Include clear instructions on what to do when your symptoms are getting worse, and when to call your healthcare provider. Add any other directions from your healthcare provider.
- When to call 911. Include clear instructions on when emergency care is needed. Direct others to call 911 when your symptoms are not responding to treatment or you are in respiratory distress.

Putting it all together

It's a good idea to meet with your family, close friends, and coworkers each year to discuss your Asthma Action Plan. You may also need to meet at other times during the year to share any changes or updates in your plan. Make sure you discuss the following.

Asthma Action Plan

Be sure to:

- Review the plan.
- Make sure everyone knows how to use an inhaler, spacer, and peak-flow meter.
- Talk with your healthcare provider to be sure you know how to use all your medicines correctly. Then you can show others how to use them correctly.
- Make sure everyone understands the Asthma Action Plan zones and what to do if you are in the yellow or red zones.
- Talk about any work policies that affect your asthma management with your supervisor, if needed.

Triggers

Stay away from air irritants or any other substances that may trigger your asthma symptoms.

Examples of Asthma Action Plans

Below is a list of examples of Asthma Action Plans for adults. Some plans are available in both English and Spanish. Talk with your healthcare provider to find out which plan is best for you.

- American Lung Association, General Asthma Action Plan: www.lung.org/getmedia/dc79f142-a963-47bc-8337-afe3c3e87734/asthma-action-plan-2020.pdf
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/asthma-action-plan-2020>
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA): www.aafa.org/media/1601/asthma-action-plan-aafa.pdf
- CDC, Different types of Asthma Action Plans from several states: <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/living-with/index.html>

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