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For more information about our health management programs call Molina Healthcare Member Services at the phone number listed on your ID Card.

Also call our Nurse Advice Line when you have questions about your health:

**1-888-275-8750**

24 Hours a day, 7 days a week - everyday of the year!

[www.molinahealthcare.com](http://www.molinahealthcare.com)

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breathe with ease  
**breathe with ease<sup>sm</sup>**  
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# Flu Season is Coming!

Have you ever had “the flu?” Flu symptoms are:

- fever • chills • sore throat • cough • muscle aches • feeling tired

### Message to Members

If you do not want the **breathe with ease<sup>sm</sup>** newsletter sent to your home, just let us know. Please call **Health Improvement Hotline** at 1 (800) 377-9594 extension 182618.

All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your doctor’s advice. Ask your doctor if you have questions.

### Smoking and Asthma Do not Mix

Would you like help to stop smoking? Call Molina’s Health Improvement Hotline at 1-800-377-9594, extension 182618 to get information about smoking cessation programs.

You may have had the flu if you have had these symptoms for about a week! Colds and flu are common asthma triggers in children under 5 years old. The triggers usually bring on more severe, longer asthma “attacks.”

Flu season starts in late Fall or Winter and lasts until early Spring. If you or your child has asthma, there are things you can do to reduce your risk of getting the flu.

#### Get a flu shot (vaccine).

You or your child should get a flu shot every year especially if you or your child:

- take asthma medicine every day.
- have severe asthma “attack,” even if only two or three times a year.

You need a shot every year because the flu viruses change every year. A virus is a kind of germ. The flu shot can reduce your risk of getting the flu. Some people may get a mild fever and muscle aches for up to 2 days after the flu shot. Do not mistake this for the flu! This is only a reaction to the shot. You cannot catch the flu from the flu shot.

Your family should get a flu shot as well. Even infants can get a flu shot. Check with your infant’s doctor.

It may take up to a month for the vaccine to start protecting you from the flu. The earlier you get the shot the better. However, a late shot is better than no shot. Flu shots are usually given from October to January.

**Treat cold symptoms right away.** You want to prevent the cold from getting worse. Colds can trigger asthma. Ask your doctor or pharmacist about what medicine to use.

**Wash hands often with soap and water.** This will kill germs that cause colds and flu. These germs can be spread from hand to hand. Keep your hands off your face. Teach your child to wash hands many times during the day. Teach your child not to put dirty hands on their face or wipe their eyes.

#### Stay away from people who have colds or flu if possible.

It is not always easy to avoid getting a cold or the flu. But it is worth trying, especially if you or your child has asthma.

The information in this newsletter agrees with national standards for the treatment of asthma. Ask your doctor any questions you may have. Distributed by Molina Healthcare, Inc.



# ASTHMA Medicine

There are 2 kinds of asthma medicines: quick-relief and controller medicines.

Some people with mild asthma only need quick-relief medicine. Other people who have asthma symptoms more often may need both kinds of asthma medicines.

**Quick-relief medicine** opens the airways fast and makes breathing easier. This medicine is used mainly to treat asthma attacks. It is taken as soon as you have symptoms or as often as your doctor tells you. If you have symptoms with exercise, your doctor may tell you to take this medicine about 10 minutes before sports or working out. Quick-relief medicine may also be known as **rescue medicine**.

**Controller medicine** prevents swelling of the airways. Over time it helps heal the airways making asthma attacks occur less often. If you wake at night from asthma or use your quick relief more than two times a week, you may need a controller. If you take a controller you take it every day, even if you feel fine. You keep taking the controller until your doctor tells you to stop. Controller medicine may also be known as **preventive medicine** and **long-term control medicine**.

## GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR INHALER!

- Use a spacer always with your metered-dose inhaler (MDI). A spacer is a holding chamber that attaches to your inhaler. It holds the spray or puff of medicine that is released from your inhaler. Spacers come in many different styles and shapes.

All spacers do the same thing. They hold the spray so it can be breathed in slowly. This helps more medicine get deep into the lungs where it can work best. A spacer can also lessen the bad taste of some medicines. If you or your child do not have a spacer, see your doctor. You can get a new spacer through your doctor every year.

## FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO USE A SPACER WITH A METER DOSE INHALER:

1. Remove the cap from the inhaler's mouthpiece. Remove the cap from the spacer's mouthpiece.
2. Attach the MDI to the spacer.
3. Shake the MDI well.
4. Breathe out all the way.
5. Place the mouthpiece of the spacer in your mouth between the teeth. Make a tight seal around the mouthpiece with your lips. Make sure that your tongue does not block the opening.
6. Press down on the canister to release a puff of medicine.
7. Breathe in slowly over 5 to 10 seconds.
8. Hold breath for 10 seconds and then exhale. Exhale into the room, not the spacer.
9. If you are supposed to take more than one puff, wait 1 to 2 minutes between puffs. Repeat steps 1 through 8.

- Use the dry powder inhaler (DPI) correctly. Some inhalers do not spray like the MDI. Some give the medicine in the form of dry powder such as Pulmicort. You do not use a spacer with a DPI. If you use a DPI, see your pharmacist or asthma educator to make sure that you are using your inhaler the right way. With a DPI you breathe in very fast and deep.

- Find out how much medicine is in each inhaler. Ask your doctor or pharmacist how many puffs are in a new inhaler. Keep track of the number of puffs or doses used. Do not go over the total number of puffs. A DPI has a counter on it. Ask where to look if you have a DPI. It is no longer recommended to float any inhaler in water to see if it still has medicine. Refill your prescription before you run out of medicine.

- Keep it clean. Rinse the mouthpiece from the MDI in warm running water. Clean the mouthpiece at least once a week. Always cover the mouthpiece with the cap when you are not using the inhaler. Wipe the DPI clean and keep it dry at all times.

**Always take medicine as your doctor tells you.** If you or your child has a dry hacking cough or wakes up at night from asthma, the asthma is not in good control. Tell your doctor. People with asthma die every year. You do not need to have severe asthma to be at risk of death from asthma. Keeping your asthma in good control is the best thing you can do for your health. It is important to follow the doctor's instructions on how and when to use asthma medicines.

# STOP SMOKING

If you have not quit smoking, do it now! It is the best thing you can do to live well with asthma. Quitting may also be the hardest thing you will ever do.

Nicotine is very addictive and people often try to stop two or three times before quitting for good. Studies have shown each time you quit you will become stronger and learn more about what it takes for you to quit for good. Why not try Molina Healthcare's stop smoking program to help you quit? There is no cost to Molina Healthcare members.

If you are a member in one of the following states and would like to enroll or have questions about the stop smoking programs, please call:

## • Molina Healthcare of California

Free and Clear® smoking cessation program  
Health Education Department – 1- 800-526-8196, Ext. 127532 (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.)

## • Molina Healthcare of Michigan

"I can Quit" Smoking Cessation Program  
1-800-480-7848

## • Molina Healthcare of New Mexico

Quitting tobacco information  
Health Education Line – 1-505-342-4660, Ext. 182618 or 1-800-377-9594, Ext. 182618

## • Molina Healthcare of Utah

Smoke Free Program - 1-888-483-0760

## • Molina Healthcare of Washington

Free and Clear® smoking cessation program  
Washington Tobacco Quit Line – 1-877-270-STOP or 1-877-270-7867, 1-877-2NO FUME – or 1-877-266-3863 (Spanish Line)  
1-877-777-6534 (TTY for the hearing impaired)

Molina Healthcare wants you to quit smoking for the sake of your health and your family's health.