



## Asthma Warning Signs



Asthma attacks rarely occur without warning. Warning signs are not the same for everyone. Know the warning signs and how to react to them. This may help you avoid an asthma attack.

### **Some common warning signs that may occur before an asthma attack are:**

- Chronic cough, especially at night;
- Chest feels tight or hurts;
- Shortness of breath;
- Feeling tired or weak;
- Itchy, scratchy, or sore throat; and/or
- Feeling restless.

Follow your asthma action plan as soon as you have any of these warning signs. If you do not have an asthma action plan, call your provider's office.

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## **Need Help Quitting Smoking?**

If you need help quitting, call Molina Healthcare's Health Improvement Hotline toll free at 1-800-377-9594, extension 182618.

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*You are receiving this newsletter as part of a Disease Management Program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in any Disease Management Program please let us know. Please call us at 1-866-891-2320.*

*All material in this newsletter is for information only. This does not replace your provider's advice.*

*Molina Healthcare services are funded in part under contract with the State of New Mexico.*

## Working With the Provider to Control Asthma

Do you feel that you and your provider are working together in your asthma care? Many people do not. The provider needs to learn a lot of information in order to give you the best treatment plan. You, as the patient, are the best source for this kind of information. It is important for you to see your provider as often as instructed, not just when you are sick. This way the provider can make sure that the treatment plan is working.

There are different types of asthma medicine. By following up with your provider, he or she will know how well the prescribed asthma medicines work for you. You may need to visit the provider more often in the beginning. Visits may be set for every one (1) to six (6) months. Ask him or her when you should come back for a follow-up asthma visit.

### At these visits, tell your provider:

- How often you use the medicine;
- Whether you do not take the prescribed medicine;
- What medicines are being used including home remedies (such as teas or herbs) or anything being used other than what the provider has ordered;
- About any changes in your asthma symptoms;
- How often you miss work or school or cannot exercise because of asthma;
- How often you wake up at night because of asthma; and
- At these visits, also ask your provider any questions you may have.

**By giving and getting information, you and your provider can work together to control asthma.**

### Make the most of every visit with these tips:

- Bring all of your asthma medicines to each visit;
- Write down the day, time, and what you were doing when asthma symptoms began;
- Bring a spacer to each visit if you have one; and
- Bring a peak flow meter to each visit if you have one.



## Tips to Prevent Further COPD Damage

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, is a disease that damages your lungs. It makes breathing very hard. COPD gets worse over time. You can't undo the damage to your lungs. There are steps you can take to prevent more damage.

**Here are some steps you can take that may help prevent your COPD from getting worse. They can also help make you feel better.**

- Quit smoking now! Smoking irritates your lungs and airways. This makes it hard to breathe. It is never too late to quit. If you quit, you will find it easier to breathe. You will also prevent more damage to your lungs. If you quit now it will improve your quality of life;
- Stay away from places and things that can irritate your lungs. This includes, indoor and outdoor air pollution, second hand smoke, smog, pollen, mold, dust mites, pet hair, cleaning supplies, cold dry air, hot humid air or high altitudes;
- Get a flu shot! Doctors suggest that all people with COPD get one. This is because people with COPD are at risk for developing complications from the flu, like pneumonia. The flu shot can help protect you. If you get the flu it can also make your COPD worse. The flu may also cause COPD exacerbation. This is a sudden worsening of your symptoms. The flu shot can help protect you from this too;
- Stay away from people who are sick with the cold, flu, cough or upper respiratory tract infection. A mild cold can make your COPD symptoms worse. Wash your hands often. Do not touch your face with your hands during the cold or flu season;
- Exercise! It will give you energy and build muscle strength. It can also help reduce shortness of breath. Exercise can improve your quality of life. Don't forget to talk to your doctor before you start an exercise plan;
- Eat well. It will also give you energy and help you fight off infections;
- Make sure you drink enough water and fluids. This will help keep mucus watery and easy to drain. This will make it easier to breathe. If you have a heart problem, talk to your doctor about how much fluid you can drink; and
- Stick to your treatment plan. It will help you feel better, and you will be less likely to become depressed. Take your medicine exactly as your doctor tells you to.



While COPD won't go away, there are things you can do to prevent more damage. If you take these steps you may feel better. It will also help you manage your COPD. Talk to your doctor if you have questions. You can also call Molina Healthcare's Nurse Advice Line for help.

Call:

**English:** 1-888-275-8750 **Spanish:** 1-866-648-3537

UNM SCI Members call 1-877-725-2552

For the hearing impaired please call

TTY (English): 1-866-735-2929

TTY (Spanish): 1-866-833-4703

# Taking Your Medicine: Important Tips You Should Know

Medicine is taken to help you manage or treat a condition or illness. Medicine can become dangerous if it is not taken correctly or if it reacts with another medicine.

**Here are a few tips to make sure you are up-to-date with the medicine you are taking.**

## **Tip #1: Knowing about your medicine**

Create a list of the medications you take. Make sure to update this list any time your doctor makes changes to your medicine. It is important to review your list of medicines with your doctor, so bring this list with you to each visit with your doctor. The list should include the following:

- Name: What is the name of the medicine?
- Amount: How much and how many do you take?
- When: When do you take the medicine?
- Purpose: Why are you taking the medicine? What is it supposed to do?

Include any other non-prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, herbs, and vitamin supplements on your list. These may interact with the prescription medicines, so it's important for your doctor to know everything you are taking. Make notes of any side effects that you have from your medicine and make sure to discuss with your doctor.

## **Tip #2: Taking your medicine**

In order for your medicine to do its job, you must take it as your doctor prescribed. It may be hard to remember to take it sometimes when you go about your day. Here are some tips to help you keep on track with taking your medications:

- Take it at the same time everyday;
- Take it together with other daily events, like brushing your teeth;
- Use a pill box;
- Ask someone close to you to help remind you; and
- Make yourself a reminder note and place it somewhere so you will see it everyday

**Always take your medicine the way your doctor told you to take it. Taking too much or skipping doses can be dangerous. Do not stop taking your medicine unless your doctor tells you to stop taking it.**

## **Tip #3: Medicine safety**

- Use the same pharmacy to pick up all of your medicines;
- Do not share medicines;
- Do not use medicine that has expired;
- Let your doctor know if you have any allergies to medicines;
- Keep your medicine out of reach from pets and children; and
- Keep your medicine away from heat and damp areas.



## Meet “Drake the Dragon”: An Asthma Program for Children

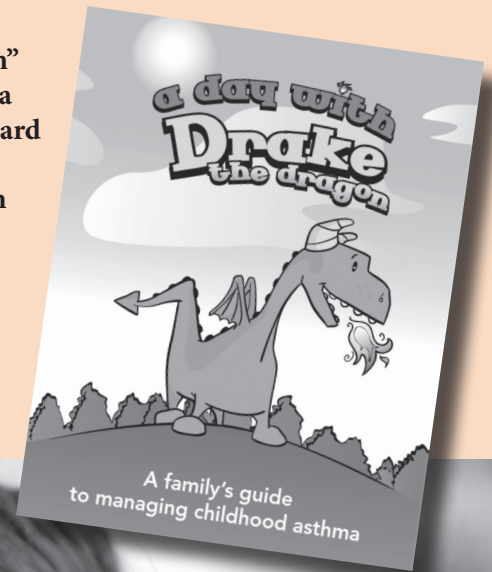
Molina Healthcare of New Mexico has a new education program for children with asthma and their families. The “Drake the Dragon” asthma program is for children four (4) years old to eleven (11) years old.

Parents and children enrolled in “Drake the Dragon” will learn how to properly care for their asthma. This colorful booklet teaches children the following:

- How to use peak flow meter;
- How to identify asthma triggers;
- How to correctly use asthma medication;
- Learn the difference between a fast acting inhaler and long term medications; and
- Why an Asthma Action Plan is so important.

To learn more about the “Drake the Dragon” asthma program, call the Molina Health Improvement Hotline toll free at 1-800-377-9594 extension 182618 or in Albuquerque at 1-505-342-4660 extension 182618.

**Children in the “Drake the Dragon” program can earn a \$20 Walmart gift card for completing an asthma action plan with their PCP!**





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## Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

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Spanish: 1-866-648-3537

UNM SCI Members: 1-877-725-2552

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Your family's health is our priority!

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