



## Questions about your health?

Call Our Nurse Advice Line!

1-888-275-8750 English

1-866-648-3537 Spanish

**OPEN 24 HOURS!**

Your family's health is our priority!

For the hearing impaired please call

TTY/866-735-2929 English

TTY/866-833-4703 Spanish



## Use Your Asthma Controller Medicines

Asthma is a condition that often leads to many emergency room visits and hospital stays. The main reason is uncontrolled asthma. Remember that asthma attacks are caused by lung inflammation that causes the airways to get red and swollen. Airways may be inflamed even when you feel good.

When airways are inflamed, a trigger such as smoke, pollen, or dust can set off an asthma attack. Keeping asthma under good control is the key to staying out of the emergency room and hospital. It is very important to use a controller medicine every day, as ordered by your provider.



### How does a controller medicine work?

- Controls the inflammation in the airways on a daily basis
- Stops the airways from reacting to triggers

Most of the controller medicines need to be taken once or twice daily. **Your provider may tell you to use controller medicines if:**

- You cough, wheeze or have a tight chest more than once a week
- You wake up at night because of asthma
- You have many asthma attacks
- You have to use a quick-relief medicine every day to stop asthma attacks

Uncontrolled asthma is not a healthy condition. If controller medicines are not used on a daily basis, lungs can undergo a change called "remodeling" or lung wall thickening. Remodeling permanently changes how the lung's airways function. Using controller medicines can help your lungs last a life time.

## Smoking and Asthma Do Not Mix

If you need help quitting, Molina Healthcare has a stop smoking program called **Free and Clear**<sup>®</sup>. Call the Washington Tobacco Quit Line at 1-877-270-7867. Quit for life.

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### Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at [www.molinahealthcare.com](http://www.molinahealthcare.com). You can use the Internet for free at most public libraries. "Click" on the member button and drag your mouse down to your state. You can get information on our website about:

- Molina Healthcare's contracted doctors and hospitals
- Your benefits, including copayments and other charges (if they apply)
- What to do if you get a bill or a claim
- FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers)
- Drug formulary (approved drugs that doctors can prescribe)
- How to contact UM staff about a UM issue or question
- How to get primary care, hospital, specialty, and emergency services
- How to get care after normal office hours
- Preventive health guidelines and immunization schedule
- Your rights and responsibilities and the privacy of your information
- Restrictions on benefits or how to obtain care outside the Molina Healthcare service area
- Quality Improvement, Health Education, and Disease Management programs
- How to voice a complaint or appeal a medical decision
- How we decide about using new technology

You can ask for printed copies of anything posted on the website by calling 1-800-869-7165. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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## Asthma Triggers: Secondhand Smoke

### What Is Secondhand Smoke?

Secondhand smoke is the exhaled smoke from a smoker's nose or mouth. It is also the smoke that comes from the end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe.

### How Can Secondhand Smoke Trigger Asthma Attacks?

Secondhand smoke irritates the inflamed airways of asthmatics. This can cause an asthma attack. This happens more often in children because their airways are still growing. Children get high doses of secondhand smoke from family members who smoke.

### How Can You Protect Yourself or Others From Secondhand Smoke?

- Do not smoke or let others smoke in your house or car
- Do not let babysitters smoke in your house or near your children
- Molina Healthcare has a stop smoking program. Call (877) 270-7867 (Washington Tobacco Quit Line) for more information

## Exercise and Asthma

Asthma should not keep you from being active. However, many people with asthma will have some symptoms, especially coughing and wheezing when they are active. Your regular asthma medicine can help to prevent these symptoms. Some people with asthma prevent symptoms from starting by taking inhaled asthma medicine before they exercise. You and your provider can plan a workout schedule that is right for you.

### Exercise Tips for People with Asthma

1. It is important to follow the asthma action plan outlined by your provider. Make sure you check with your provider before starting a new exercise or sports program.
2. Check your peak flow before and after you exercise. Your peak flow meter measures how well you are breathing. If you experience asthma symptoms and/or a big drop in your peak flow, you may need extra medicine or a short rest. Ask your provider what you should do if your asthma symptoms get worse while you are exercising.
3. Warm up before you work out. A good five to 10 minute warm-up slowly increases your breathing levels. This helps you avoid an attack. Ask your provider about the best way to warm up.

4. Take a break during exercise if you feel asthma symptoms starting. Don't exercise at all if you are not breathing well.
5. Always keep your quick-relief medicine handy while exercising.
6. If your provider tells you to, take your asthma medicine before exercising.
7. Do only light exercise if you have a cold or the flu.



## Get an Asthma Action Plan



### What is an asthma action plan?

An asthma action plan is a written plan using the colors of a traffic light. It will tell you how to treat asthma symptoms early before they become severe. Your provider will write the asthma action plan with you and your child. It will also tell you what triggers your or your child's asthma.

### Who needs an asthma action plan?

Every child or adult with moderate to severe asthma should have an asthma action plan. All schools in Washington now require students with asthma to have an asthma action plan in place.

### Why is an asthma action plan needed?

It tells you what to do based on how you feel or your peak flow readings. A written plan tells others what steps to take to help you or your child. Written plans also tell teachers, coaches, school nurses and health aids how to treat your child's asthma.

### How is an asthma action plan used?

Follow the actions listed for your or your child's zone.

### Green Zone

This zone lists things to do every day even when you or your child feel fine. Take the medicine listed in this zone to prevent asthma symptoms. This medicine is called a controller medicine. Controller medicines treat the swelling and mucous in the airway. If running or playing sports triggers an asthma attack, your provider will also list a medicine to take about 10 minutes before exercise.

### Yellow Zone

If your peak flow readings drop into the yellow zone or you start having asthma symptoms take the medicine listed in this zone. This medicine is called quick-relief medicine. If you or your child is using this medicine more than two times per week, tell your provider. Your provider may need to change your or your child's controller medicine.

### Red Zone

If your peak flow readings drop into the red zone, take the medicine listed in this zone and get help right away. This is a medical emergency. Do not wait to get medical help.

Ask your provider to teach you how to use the plan. You can control asthma with a good asthma action plan.

You are receiving this as part of the Breathe with Ease<sup>SM</sup> program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or be in the Breathe with Ease<sup>SM</sup> program, please call our Health Education Line at 1-800-423-9899, Ext. 141428.