



Who's Got Control — You or Your Asthma?



Living with asthma is no picnic. Asthma sufferers often feel like there is an elephant sitting on their chest, and struggle simply to draw a normal breath. You do not want to miss out on summer activities or worry about when the next attack will come.

While asthma is not curable, it is treatable. Learn to use a peak flow meter and follow your asthma action plan. Learn how to prevent future attacks by using your controller medicine as directed by your provider.

If you have a good asthma control plan you may be able to:

- Breathe freely day and night because of nearly normal lung function
- Minimize or stop attacks
- Respond to flare-ups before they become serious
- Reduce “down time” from work or school
- Exercise and participate in regular activities
- Avoid emergency room visits and/or hospital stays

When you and your provider write an asthma action plan, you will learn how to better control your asthma. And hopefully, no elephants will be sitting on your chest.

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Need Help Quitting Smoking?

If you need help quitting call Molina Healthcare's **Health Improvement Hotline** at 1-800-377-9594, ext. 182618 to get information about smoking cessation programs.

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.

Safe Exercise with COPD



You need to stay active while living with COPD. Your exercises do not have to be fancy or hard. They must be done safely and on a regular basis. **Check with your provider before you start any exercise program.**

What kind of exercise is good for people with COPD?

Stretching and breathing exercises, plus a daily walk, are a good start. Walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it is simple and can be done anywhere during any time of year. Try walking around your home, at the nearby mall, or at a local park.

You should be doing the following exercises at least three times per week:

- **Stretching** relaxes you and makes you more flexible. It is also a good way to warm up before and cool down after exercising.
- **Aerobic exercise** allows your body to use oxygen better. Swimming, walking, climbing stairs and dancing are all great choices.
- **Light weight training** makes your muscles stronger so your breathing muscles do not have to work as hard.

Tips for easy exercise:

- **Talk to your provider before starting your exercise program.** Your provider may advise you to use your inhaler before exercising or recommend using portable oxygen during your workouts.
- **Pace yourself.** No matter what kind of exercise you're doing, never rush! Take your time. Sit or lie down if you feel dizzy.
- **Be patient.** Start off slow. Over time, you can increase your activity level.
- **Set goals.** Setting a fitness goal is the first step to reaching it. If you want to be able to walk for 10 minutes without becoming breathless, make that your goal.
- **Relax and think positive.** Relaxation and a positive outlook can help you get the most out of exercising.
- **Watch pollution levels and weather.** Do not exercise outdoors if smog or pollution levels are high. Avoid exercising outside on days that are too cold, too hot, or too humid.
- **Find exercises that are right for you.** You are more likely to stick with an exercise program when it is something you enjoy. If you like to dance, sign-up for lessons. If you like to swim, check out the programs at your local pool.

Don't Stop Taking Your Asthma Medication Until You Talk to Your Doctor

We want to help our members who have asthma improve their lives. For your safety we check to see if you are getting asthma medicine. We have noticed that many of our preteen and teenagers stop their asthma medicine. Are you one that doesn't feel the need to get your prescriptions filled at the drug store because you may think your asthma is in good control or it may have gone away? Asthma may improve but there is no cure for asthma. It is important to get your medications filled before you run out. The national standard for asthma care says you should have regular visits to your doctor. You should see your doctor even if you think your asthma is in good control.

- You and your family should talk to the doctor about asthma care at each visit

- Talk about any barriers you have with your asthma control
- You and your family can work together with your doctor to find what works best for your asthma control
- You should set goals that will help care for your asthma and your asthma action plan will help you do this

We want you to practice self care of your asthma. But you need to keep your doctor up to date on your asthma control. Talk with your doctor about your asthma action plan at each visit. Talk with your doctor before changing how much medicine you take. Talk with your doctor before stopping medicine. Remember Molina Healthcare pays for your doctor appointment for asthma care.

Asthma Action Plans

An action plan is a written daily routine. You can follow this routine to help you control your or your child's asthma. An action plan can help you with the following:

- Identify and avoid triggers;
- Identify and treat early symptoms of a flare-up;
- Manage a severe flare-up; and
- Know when to seek emergency care.

You can organize your or your child's action plan by using the traffic light system. This includes having a green, yellow, and red zone.

Green zone

This zone describes how to take care of your or your child's asthma on a daily basis. It should include a list of triggers and ways to avoid them.

Yellow zone

This zone describes how to look for symptoms of your or your child's asthma. It should include a list of early flare-up to watch for. It should also include ways to treat these symptoms.

Red zone

This zone describes what to do when your or your child's asthma symptoms become severe. It should include



emergency phone numbers and a list of urgent care centers or emergency rooms near your home.

You should also include the names and dosages of all your or your child's medicines. The action plan should tell when and how they should be used.

After you have completed an action plan with your or your child's provider, you should put it in a place where you can see it every day. You should also share your action plan with family members and care givers. It is important to update your or your child's action plan every time your or your child's medicine or the dosage changes. Having an action plan is an important part of managing your or your child's asthma. If you do not have an action plan ask your provider to help you create one.



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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

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