



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



First Steps When You Have an Attack

Having an asthma attack can be scary. It is important to have an action plan and know what steps to take if you have an asthma attack. That way, you will be prepared and will know how to best care for yourself.



The first thing you should do is get away from the asthma trigger. Minimize your exposure to the thing that is making your asthma worse. Second, think about how you feel. Is the asthma attack mild or severe? If your attack is severe, you will most likely have trouble walking or talking due to shortness of breath. Use your peak flow meter. If the reading is less than half of your best value, you are having a severe attack.

Next, use your quick-relief inhaler. This will help open up your airways. In addition, your doctor may want you to take a prescription steroid tablet. This will help with the swelling on the inside of your airways. This is a long-term medicine so you will not feel its effects right away.

Lastly, know when to call for help. If you are following your action plan and do not feel any better, get help immediately. Keep your health care provider's phone number with you, and remember, you can always get emergency help by dialing 911.

Be informed about your asthma. Knowing what to do can help keep your asthma under control. It could even save your life!

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 **Free and Clear**[®].

In This Issue

First Steps	pg 1
Timing Your Medication	pg 2
Types of Asthma	pg 2
Medication Information	pg 3
Nurse Advice Line	pg 4

Check Out the Molina Healthcare Website

Check out the Molina Healthcare website at 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 1-800-580-2811. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

Breathe with EaseSM is developed by Molina Healthcare, Inc.

All rights reserved. All information has been written and reviewed by doctors, nurses, health educators, and registered dietitians. All material in this publication is for information only. This does not replace your doctor's advice.

Molina Healthcare does not discriminate in providing medical care on the basis of preexisting health conditions, race, color, religion, age, national origin, disability, or sex.

Timing Your Medication

Good asthma control means taking your medication correctly. There are two main types of asthma medication. Quick-relief medicine is one type. It acts fast to open up your airways. You should take your quick-relief medicine when you first begin to feel symptoms. Your doctor may want you to take this medicine 15 minutes before exercise. Carry your quick-relief inhaler with you all the time.

Long-term medicine is the second type. It is used to prevent asthma symptoms. These drugs ease swelling on the inside of your airways. One kind is an inhaled steroid. It is important to take this medicine even if you feel well. It works best when taken on a regular basis. You should rinse, gargle and spit with water after each dose of inhaled steroids.

Consistent use of medications is key to symptom prevention. Take your preventive medicine every day. Try taking your medicine along with something you always do. This will help you to remember to take it.

Here is a list of ideas from the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute:

- Keep your medicine on the nightstand next to the bed.
- Take your medicine right after you brush your teeth.
- Put reminder notes in visible places like the bathroom mirror or front door.
- Place your medicine in a weekly pillbox.
- Set a watch alarm to beep and remind you to take your medicine.
- Remember to refill your prescription. Order and pick up the next refill one week before the medicine is due to run out.

Knowing when and how to take your medication is important. It can make a difference in asthma control. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse if you have questions.

Types of Asthma

Did you know that there are different types of asthma? Today asthma is divided into these groups:

- Allergic
- Exercise-induced
- Occupational
- Intrinsic
- Nocturnal
- Steroid-resistant

Allergic

Most people with asthma have this kind of asthma. It is triggered by allergens like animal dander, dust mites, pollen and mold. Other causes are pollution and cigarette smoke. Childhood asthma is also included in this group.

Intrinsic

This means that allergies are not the cause. This type of asthma usually occurs in people 40 years old or older. Strong odors, colds and gastroesophageal reflux (GERD) can set off their asthma.

Exercise-induced

This kind of asthma can occur when the lungs lose heat

and moisture. This loss occurs during exercise. Exercising in cold weather can make it worse.

Nocturnal

This means “nighttime.” So this type of asthma affects people when they are sleeping. Symptoms are usually worse between midnight and 4 a.m.

Occupational

Breathing in irritants at work can cause asthma. Irritants can include wood dust and fumes. This type of asthma is a result of breathing in these irritants over a long period of time.

Steroid-resistant

Some asthma is from an overuse of asthma medication. This means that asthma doesn’t respond to medication.

Knowing what type of asthma you have can help you manage it better. Ask your health care provider if you are not sure.

Medication Information



Asthma is a disease of the airways. There are two main parts to asthma. These are constriction and inflammation. Constriction means that the muscles around your airways tighten. Your airways then get narrower. This makes it hard for air to get in and out. It causes signs like wheezing, coughing, tightness in your chest and trouble breathing.

Inflammation means that the inside of the airways are swollen. This also makes the airways narrower. Also, extra mucous is made. It can clog the airways.

Asthma medicine works on these two main parts. Some are taken short-term. Others are taken long-term. Short-term medicines relax the muscles around your airways. They are fast acting to help you breathe better. You should take your quick-relief medicine when you first begin to feel symptoms. Carry your quick-relief inhaler with you all the time.

Long-term medications are taken daily. Some control swelling. They include:

- Corticosteroids
- Mast cell stabilizers

Others open up the airways. They are:

- Long acting beta-agonists
- Theophylline

Asthma medicine comes in different forms. It can be inhaled through a metered dose inhaler, dry powder inhaler, or nebulizer. It can also be taken in a pill or liquid. There is even a newer type of medicine that is injected under the skin.

There are some over the counter asthma medications. These work by relaxing the muscles around your airways. You will get short-term relief for 20-30 minutes. But these drugs do not control asthma symptoms. Also, they do not prevent asthma attacks. Some people should not take this type of medicine. These include people with high blood pressure, diabetes, thyroid disease, or heart disease.

Taking your medicine is part of good asthma control. Here are some helpful tips:

- Call in refills at least two days before running out of medicine.
- Rinse your mouth out after taking inhaled steroids.
- Wash your hands before taking your medicine.
- Store your medicine according to the instructions given with the prescription.
- Check liquid medicines. Have they changed color or formed crystals? If so, throw them away and get new ones.
- Tell your doctor about all medicines you take.

Asthma cannot be cured. However, it can be controlled. Knowing about your medication is part of leading a healthy, active life.

You are receiving this as part of the Breathe with EaseSM program. If you do not want to receive this newsletter or participate in the Breathe with EaseSM program, please call us at Molina Health Education at 1-800-580-2811.