



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 Healthcare of Utah's **Smoke Free** Program toll-free at 1-888-483-0760 ext. 170458. Molina members can join the **Smoke Free** Smoking Cessation Program at no cost.

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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 1-888-483-0760. Your member handbook is also a good resource. You can find it on our website.

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Emergency Preparations

Asthma attacks can range from mild to severe. Part of keeping your asthma in good control is having an emergency plan. The plan includes how to adjust your medicines based on your symptoms and who to call for help. That way everyone knows what to do if you have a severe attack.

First, you should have some basic information written down. Keep this information handy. This includes your name, a person to contact in case of an emergency along with their phone number. It should also include your healthcare provider's name and phone number.

A peak flow meter is a hand-held device. It measures how fast you can blow air out of your lungs. You should also know your best peak flow meter number.

The American Lung Association divides up asthma symptoms into three zones. The green zone means that you are not having problems with your asthma. The yellow zone means that your asthma is getting worse. You might have problems breathing, or have a cough, wheeze or tight chest. In the yellow zone, your peak flow meter reading is between 50% and 80% of your personal best.

The red zone means that there is a medical emergency. You have trouble breathing. Medicine is not helping. Call an ambulance if danger signs are present. Danger signs include trouble walking or talking due to shortness of breath, and/or your lips or fingernails are blue.

Ask your healthcare provider to help you with an asthma action plan. Make sure the form is updated frequently. It doesn't take long, and it could save your life!

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.

What Causes Asthma?



Asthma is a chronic disease of the airways. It causes symptoms like wheezing, breathlessness, tightness in your chest, and a cough. The cause of asthma is a combination of heredity and the environment.

You are more likely to have asthma if other people in your family have it too. Also, there are many things in the environment that can bring on asthma symptoms.

The National Heart Lung Blood Institute gives these examples of asthma triggers:

Allergens

- Animal dander
- Dust mites
- Cockroaches
- Pollen from trees and grass
- Indoor or outdoor mold

Irritants

- Cigarette smoke
- Air pollution

- Cold air
- Strong odors from painting or cooking
- Scented products
- Strong emotions like stress or crying or laughing too hard

Others

- Medicines like aspirin
- Sulfites in dried fruit or wine
- Acid reflux
- Infections

Your body acts on these triggers in two ways. First, the airways might get narrower and get clogged with mucus. They get narrower because the muscles around them tighten. Next, they could get inflamed or swollen. This makes it hard for air to get into and out of your lungs.

Asthma attacks can be mild to severe. It is important to know what things make your asthma worse. That way, you can do your best to avoid them.

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 1-888-483-0760.