



Respiratory Care WA

Asthma | COPD | Respiratory Health



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respiratorycarewa.org.au

Your 6 Step Asthma Management Plan

Step 1: Know how severe your asthma is

If you recognise any of the following symptoms then you probably have moderate to severe asthma:

- If you need asthma medication most weeks of the year;
- If you have needed urgent medical attention for asthma in the past year or so; and
- If your peak flow measurement is consistently below expected, despite optimal treatment.

Assess the severity of your asthma and have it checked by your doctor.

Step 2: Achieve your best lung function

When you are at your best you should ideally have:

- No symptoms;
- Best possible peak flow measurements; and
- Your chest should sound normal when your doctor examines you. It may take a few weeks of medication to achieve your best. Monitoring peak flow measurements at home can help you to check your progress.

When you have reached your best you will probably feel much better.

Step 3: Avoid trigger factors

Find out what sets off your asthma and try to stay away from it. These triggers could be:

- House dust, pollens, pets, moulds;
- Tobacco smoke;
- Things around your workplace or school, like wood dust, flour dust, chemical fumes, animals and many other things;
- Food preservatives, colourings and monosodium glutamate (MSG); and
- Air pollution and respiratory infections, such as colds or bronchitis, commonly trigger asthma but are difficult to avoid.

Exercise is good for everyone including people with asthma. Although it can trigger asthma it is important not to avoid exercise. Exercise induced asthma (EIA) can usually be easily controlled through medication and an appropriate exercise regime. Talk to your doctor or local Asthma Educator to learn how to control asthma during exercise.



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Step 4: Stay at your best

If you need medications these should be as simple, safe and effective as possible. This is why inhaled medications are most often used for asthma.

There are four types of inhaled medication that your doctor might advise you to use.

1. “Relievers” (such as Bricanyl, Ventolin, Asmol and Airomir) are called bronchodilators. These provide relief of asthma symptoms and are used in asthma first aid.
2. “Preventers” (such as Flixotide, Qvar, Pulmicort, Intal, Tilade, and Singulair) help to keep your asthma under good control preventing asthma flare-ups. These will only work if you use them regularly.
3. “Symptom Controllers” (such as Oxis, Foradile, and Serevent).
4. “Combination Medications” (such as Seretide and Symbicort) these combine a Symptom Controller and a Preventer in one device.

Your doctor will prescribe the medications that are best for you.

Step 5: Know your action plan

Together with your doctor you can work out a plan so that you can:

- Recognise when your asthma is getting worse;
- Know how to treat it quickly; and
- Know how and where to get the right medical assistance.

Early attention to worsening asthma may prevent you from having a serious flare-up. Ask your doctor for an Asthma Action Plan.

Step 6: Check your asthma regularly

Asthma can usually be kept under control. Follow your 6 point management plan and see your doctor for regular check-ups, not just in emergencies. You should have your asthma reviewed by your GP every six months.