



# Take Control of Your Asthma

## Monitor your symptoms

Good asthma control means:

- You have symptoms less than twice a week
- You need your reliever medicine less than twice a week, or not at all
- Your activities are not limited by your asthma
- You don't get any symptoms at night or when you wake up

If you're having symptoms or needing to use your reliever more than twice a week, your asthma could be better controlled and might be holding you back.

## Know your triggers

A trigger is something that causes asthma symptoms. Identifying and avoiding your triggers where possible can help to control your asthma.

## Understand your medication

Asthma medications keep you well and maintain good asthma control.

Always carry your reliever medication for quick relief from asthma symptoms. If you have a preventer, take it every day as prescribed, even when well, to reduce symptoms and the possibility of an asthma flare-up.

## Check your inhaler technique

Using your inhaler correctly helps your medications work better and reduce the risk of side effects. If you use a puffer, using a spacer as well will help get more medication into your lungs. To check your inhaler technique, contact Respiratory Care WA, your doctor or pharmacist.

## Have an current Asthma Action Plan

An Asthma Action Plan is a set of instructions written with your doctor that helps you to stay in control of your asthma. Review your Asthma Action Plan with your doctor every day.

## Know asthma first aid

As asthma flare-up can build slowly over time or come on suddenly. If you are experiencing a severe or life-threatening asthma attack, call an ambulance - Dial Triple Zero (000) and then start asthma first aid. If you are experiencing a mild to moderate asthma flare-up, start asthma first aid.

## Be healthy

Be active, eat well, maintain a healthy weight. Quitting smoking will improve your lung health. Keep up to date with your flu shots. Look after your mental health. For more advice regarding a healthy lifestyle speak to your doctor or pharmacist.



## Looking After Your Asthma & Allergic Rhinitis

### Asthma & allergic rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis, commonly known as hay fever, can make managing asthma more difficult.

Around 80% of people with asthma also have allergic rhinitis. Review your asthma and your allergic rhinitis with your doctor.

### Know your symptoms

It can be difficult to identify if your symptoms are asthma or allergic. Here are some common symptoms of each.

#### ASTHMA

- Feeling short of breath
- A feeling of tightness in the chest
- Wheezing - a continuous, high-pitched sound coming from the chest while breathing
- Coughing

#### ALLERGIC RHINITIS

- Runny, itchy nose
- Sneezing
- Itchy or watery eyes
- Blocked nose
- Breathing through the mouth

Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about your symptoms and their severity, as well as how often they occur. This will help determine the best management plan for you.

### Check your technique

Using your device correctly helps your medications work better. This includes inhalers, spacers as well as nasal sprays. To check your device technique, contact your doctor or pharmacist. If you have asthma and/or COPD, call Respiratory Care WA on (08) 9289 3600 to book a free education session with one of our Respiratory Health Nurses or Educators.

### Know your triggers

Identifying, and avoiding or minimising exposure to your confirmed triggers may help to control your asthma and allergic rhinitis. Triggers may include pollens, dust mites, grasses, animal dander and mould.

Helpful tips to minimise your exposure:

- Vacuum and dust surfaces with damp cloth regularly
- Remove soft toys from bedrooms or wash weekly in hot water over 55° Celsius. Do the same for your bed linen.
- Close doors and windows on high-pollen or windy days and stay indoors, if possible
- Plant low allergen plants in the garden
- Use dust mite resistant covers on mattresses, pillows and doonas
- Avoid having pets in the main living areas and bedrooms

### Treat your allergy rhinitis

Treatment options for allergic rhinitis can include one or a combination of the following:

- preservative-free nasal saline sprays/irrigations
- antihistamines (nasal sprays, tablets, eyedrops and syrups)
- corticosteroid nasal spray
- decongestant (oral tablets or preservative-free nasal spray)
- allergen-specific immunotherapy/desensitisation
- allergen avoidance

Talk to your doctor and pharmacist about the best treatment options for you.

### Asthma flare-ups

If your allergic rhinitis causes your Asthma to flare-up, be prepared. Always carry your reliever with you, follow your Asthma Action Plan and know Asthma first aid.

Remember to continue to take your preventer medication everyday as prescribed.