

**TREAT.
CONTROL.
BREATHE.** 



Discussion Guide and Asthma Action Plan

Take this with you to your child's next appointment

This guide will help remind you of issues you would like to discuss with the doctor in order to develop an asthma action plan for your child.

Before the visit

- Take a look at these helpful tips, then complete the asthma symptom chart below to help you report your child's asthma symptoms to the doctor.
- Do your research. If your child has another health issue or you have doubts about the treatment, find out all you can before visit. It will help you to argue and ask more specific questions.
- Prepare answers to some of the things your child's doctor may want to talk about: your child's breathing symptoms, his or her response to treatment, what you may know about your child's triggers, etc.

Here are some common triggers to keep in mind¹

Allergens

- Grass/tree/weed pollens
- Food or food additives
- Airborne mold
- Animal dander and saliva
- Dust mites
- Cockroach droppings

Irritants

- Strong odors/perfumes
- Cigarette smoke
- Fumes from gas stove
- Aerosol sprays

Other Triggers

- Colds or viral infections
- Reflux disease/heartburn
- Exercise
- Medications
- Prolonged laughing or crying
- Cold air
- Emotional distress

Other triggers



My child's asthma symptoms

| Changes since your child's last doctor visit | Write down your observations, for example, has the child experienced this symptom? How often? At what time of day? |
|---|--|
| Coughing | |
| Wheezing | |
| Shortness of breath | |
| Tightness in chest/complains of chest hurting | |
| Restlessness during sleep | |
| Using a quick-relief bronchodilator medicine* | |
| limitation in activities due to asthma | |

*If your child is using a quick-relief bronchodilator medicine more than twice a week, then his or her asthma may not be as controlled as you think.³

Have there been any times when your child's asthma symptoms were a lot worse than usual?

Yes No

Do your child's asthma symptoms seem to be worse during the day, night, or when playing? Check all that apply:

Day Night During play

How many days in the past week have you given your child his or her inhaled rescue medicine (quick-relief bronchodilator)?

During the past month, at night or early morning, has your child been awakened by asthma? If so, how many times did it happen?





My child's asthma triggers

List any triggers you are aware of that may be causing your child's asthma symptoms.

During the visit - Part 1

Prepare a list of questions or concerns you want to talk about. Here is a list to get you started.

Should I be concerned about my child's asthma symptoms?

Should I watch for any particular asthma symptoms?

What triggers should I help my child avoid? How to avoid it?

What kind of changes do I need to make to my child's home and school/day care environment?

What are the benefits of a controller medicine, how it works and how long will he or she need it?

How soon after starting on a new medication should my child's asthma symptoms improve?

How often should I give my child his or her medicine?

List additional questions you might have:





During the visit - Part 2

- Make sure you understand all of your doctor's answers and explanations. If you don't, keep asking questions of the doctor or staff until you do understand.
- Take notes to help you understand or remember.
- Let your child's doctor know what is and isn't working with your child's asthma treatment plan.
- Discuss any medication concerns you have with your child's doctor (how to use it, side effects, advice from family and friends, etc.).
- Ask your child's doctor or nurse for any printed handouts or written instructions he or she may have.

After the visit

- Review your notes and any written information you were given. If you have any questions, call your child's doctor's office. Make sure you understand exactly what you are supposed to do.
- Continue to talk with your child's doctor as new issues come up, or if your child develops new breathing symptoms.
- If you feel too rushed during a regular office visit or phone call to get all the answers you need, think about making an appointment with your child's doctor just to discuss your concerns. Or, ask if he or she can call you back at the end of office hours.

Asthma Action Plan²

How Do I Read the Plan?

Many action plans use a color-coded system to help parents understand how to care for their child's asthma. The "zone system," which is commonly used, is based on the red, yellow, and green colors of a traffic light. Action plans use symptoms, peak flow readings, or both to help you see what "zone" your child is in:

- The green zone, or safety zone, explains how to manage asthma when your child is feeling good.
 - The yellow zone, or caution zone, explains how to look for signs that asthma is getting worse. It also explains which medicines to add to bring your child's asthma back under control.
 - The red zone, or danger zone, explains what to do when a flare-up is severe.
- Following the advice in the asthma action plan will help prevent attacks.³

So become familiar with the plan right away, and talk to the doctor if you have any questions.

Your child should learn about the plan too, and older kids should know which steps they can take themselves and when they should get help.

ASTHMA ACTION PLAN*

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Name: | Date: | Emergency Contact: |
| Doctor: | Medical Record #: | Doctor's Signature: |
| Doctor's Phone #: | | |

The colors represent a guide to the areas where the patient is, which will help you in the management of asthma:



GREEN means Safety Zone
Use preventive medicine.



YELLOW means Caution Zone
Add quick-relief medicine.



RED means Danger Zone
Get help from a doctor.

Personal Best Peak Flow: _____

SAFETY

Use these daily controller medicines:

You have all of these:

- Breathing is good
- No cough or wheeze
- Sleep through the night
- Can work & play

| MEDICINE | HOW MUCH | HOW OFTEN/WHEN |
|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

For asthma with exercise, take:

Peak flow: from _____ to _____

CAUTION

Continue with the green zone medicine and add:

You have any of these:

- First signs of cold
- Exposure to known trigger
- Cough
- Mild Wheeze
- Tight chest
- Coughing at night

| MEDICINE | HOW MUCH | HOW OFTEN/WHEN |
|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

CALL YOUR ASTHMA CARE PROVIDER.

Peak flow: from _____ to _____

DANGER

Take these medicines and call to your doctor now.

Your asthma is getting worst fast:

- Medicine is not helping
- Breathing is hard & fast
- Nose opens wide
- Trouble speaking

| MEDICINE | HOW MUCH | HOW OFTEN/WHEN |
|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Peak flow: reading below _____

GET HELP FROM A DOCTOR NOW! Your doctor will want to see you right away. It's important! If you cannot contact your doctor, go directly to the emergency room. DO NOT WAIT.

Make an appointment with your asthma care provider within two days of an ER visit or hospitalization.



What Else Should I Know?

The action plan should go everywhere your child goes. Keep a copy at home in a well-known spot, and give one to the school nurse, teachers, and anyone else who cares for your child. Explain the plan to them so they'll be comfortable following it.

Review the plan with your doctor at least every 6 months to keep it current. Any time something changes — if your child's medicine dose changes, for example — update the plan and give new copies to all caregivers and teachers.



*This action plan has been developed taking as reference the action plan of the "Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America"

References:

1. National Asthma Education and Prevention Program . (2014). National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute. Available at: https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/files/docs/public/lung/asthma_tipsheets.pdf
2. Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America. (2015) Asthma Action Plan. Available at: <https://www.aafa.org/asthma-treatment-action-plan/>
3. GINA. Global strategy for asthma management and prevention. Gina patient guide: you can control your asthma, 2020. Available at: <https://ginasthma.org/gina-patient-guide-you-can-control-your-asthma>

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CC-5006 Mar 2022