



Asthma:

Working Together with
your Healthcare Team



Whether asthma is new to you or something you've lived with for years, there are times when you have questions about your breathing. Your doctor and care team are the right people to go to for answers – they know the latest information and treatments for asthma and can decide with you what is best based on your individual symptoms and concerns.

When your asthma is uncontrolled or limits what you can do in a day, it's important to speak up, work with your team and get the care you need and deserve.



Your Asthma Rights

You deserve...

- a timely, straightforward referral when your moderate to severe asthma cannot be managed by your primary care team
- a timely formal diagnosis of your moderate to severe asthma by an expert team
- support to understand your type of asthma
- care that reduces the impact of moderate to severe asthma on your daily life and improves your overall quality of care
- not to be reliant on oral corticosteroids
- access to consistent quality care, regardless of where you live or where you choose to access it

Revised from A Charter to Improve Patient Care in Severe Asthma

By sharing your questions with your doctor and your care team, you can work together to find the answers that are right for you. Many people feel like they don't want to "bother their doctor" with questions or feel vulnerable asking for more information.

It's important
to ask **ALL** of
your questions
and get the care
that you need.



Here are some tips to help get the conversation started!

Appointment With Your Doctor

Prepare

- Think about what you want to tell your doctor
- Make a list of your questions
- Ask your most important question first as time may be limited

Know

- Know the names of your medications - bring a list with you to your appointment
- Be sure the list is for **ALL** of your medications - not just the ones for asthma

At Your Visit

- Take notes so you can remember what the doctor says - bring someone with you for help if needed
- Ask for the meaning of words you don't understand
- Review what was said to be sure you understand

Open discussions are always helpful in asthma management and will help both you and your healthcare professional to achieve the same goals. If you do not understand your diagnosis, treatment plan, medications, asthma inhaler technique or anything else, it is very important that you ask your doctor for guidance during the consultation.

Questions You May Want to Ask

- What are some of the warning signs of asthma?
- What's the first thing to do when symptoms begin?
- What are the signs that you need medical help? Your
- How do I prevent symptoms from coming back?
- What specific triggers should I avoid?
- How do I avoid triggers?
- Am I using my inhaler correctly? (Bring your inhaler and demonstrate how you use it)
- How do I reduce the need for medication?

What to Take to Your Appointment

- A complete list of your medications (even better – bring the medications!)
- The completed “My Appointment with my Doctor” pages (see page 5)
- A family member, caregiver or friend (if needed)
- Paper and pencil to take notes
- Your insurance card and identification



My Appointment With My Doctor

Name: _____

Appointment date: _____

My Asthma

My asthma right now...

- ☐ I feel good and can do everything I want and need to do.
- ☐ My breathing bothers me most days and I have to limit my activity.
- ☐ I'm really struggling to breathe and have trouble getting through the day.

I have had the following symptoms since my last visit:

- ☐ Coughing
- ☐ Tightness in my chest
- ☐ Wheezing
- ☐ Shortness of breath

I know that my asthma triggers are:

- ☐ I don't know what triggers my asthma.

My breathing has made it difficult:

- ☐ At school or work
- ☐ To exercise
- ☐ To sleep
- ☐ To perform my daily activities

I have gone to an urgent care center or emergency room for my asthma since my last visit:

- ☐ Yes If yes, how many times? _____
- ☐ No

MY MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS:

Other questions:

Helpful Information for My Healthcare Team

Asthma medications that I take:

Name: _____ Dose: _____ How often I take it: _____

Name: _____ Dose: _____ How often I take it: _____

Name: _____ Dose: _____ How often I take it: _____

If you use an inhaler – demonstrate how you use it with a member of your healthcare team

Other medications that I take (include over-the-counter medications, supplements and herbal supplements):

I have side effects from my medications: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Explain: _____

I have taken oral corticosteroids in the past year: ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how many times? _____

Other:

I have an Asthma Action Plan and understand how to use it. ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ I smoke. ☐ I live with a smoker.

☐ I have a pet. Kind of pet(s): _____

☐ I miss school or work days because of my asthma. Number of days this year: _____

I need help understanding how to use:

☐ My inhaler ☐ My spacer/valved holding chamber ☐ My nebulizer

Please consider the Clear (Red) and Concerning (Yellow) signs of severe asthma in the checklist below. Please put a "X" in the box next to any of the signs that apply to you. If any of the Clear (Red) signs apply to you or if you have put an "X" next to some of the Concerning (Yellow) signs and you are worried, please share this information with your doctor at your visit. The goal is to help you reduce symptoms and improve your quality of life.



Clear signs

- ☐ I regularly visit the emergency services or have stayed in hospital
- ☐ I am often absent from work or school due to asthma
- ☐ I often feel that nothing works to help with my symptoms
- ☐ I often feel that asthma is controlling my life
- ☐ I am scared of dying from asthma
- ☐ My disease is unpredictable with regular asthma attacks (flare-ups)
- ☐ I have symptoms that never go away
- ☐ I have had two or more sets of steroid tablets in 12 months
- ☐ I use my reliever/rescue medication more than twice a week even though I take my controller inhaler(s) and tablets
- ☐ I regularly use nebulizers to relieve my symptoms

Concerning signs

- ☐ I cannot do the things that I want to do, like exercise or household chores
- ☐ I often need help from someone to conduct my daily activities, like cooking or laundry
- ☐ Asthma puts a stress on my relationships
- ☐ I am often forced to make unwanted changes to my daily life
- ☐ I often feel depressed or anxious due to asthma
- ☐ I often feel isolated and alone
- ☐ I often feel like I have a heavy weight pushing down on my chest
- ☐ My coughing often interferes with my normal activities
- ☐ My symptoms often keep me awake at night
- ☐ I cannot walk upstairs without becoming short of breath
- ☐ I forget to take my controller inhalers
- ☐ I am afraid of the side effects of my asthma medications

Source: The PULSAR Checklist for Severe Asthma

After Your Appointment:

- Did you get the answers that you need? If not, make a list and call the office. Ask when would be a good time for someone to call you back to talk about a few questions that you still have.
- Did you get a new prescription for medication? Fill it as soon as possible and take the medication as directed. If you have questions about how to use your medication or what it does, your pharmacist is a great source for information.
- Do you have an Asthma Action Plan? If you don't understand it, ask for help.
- Start a list for your next doctor's appointment! Track your asthma triggers, how often you need your medication, and anything you're concerned about.

