

What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs. Asthma affects both adults and children. There is no cure for asthma. But it can be controlled.

What are the symptoms of asthma?

The symptoms of asthma are:



- ▶ shortness of breath
- ▶ coughing
- ▶ wheezing
- ▶ chest tightness

What happens in an asthma attack?

During an attack, the lungs become swollen, so that the amount of air that is able to go in or out of the lungs is reduced. A lot of mucus is produced, clogging the lungs and making breathing more difficult. Asthma attacks can be mild or severe.

What causes an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is caused by an **Asthma Trigger**, which is something that bothers or irritates your lungs.

Examples of asthma triggers are:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Furry pets | Mold |
| Pollen | Dust mites |
| Cockroaches | Cigarette smoke |
| Colds and Flu | Cold weather |

Talk to your doctor to find out what triggers your asthma attacks.

How can I control my asthma?

Medicine for asthma comes in two forms: **quick-relief** and **long-term** control. **Quick-relief medicines** control your asthma symptoms. **Long-term medicine** reduces the number of asthma attacks you have. Asthma medicine comes in different forms, including:

- a **nebulizer**
- a **dry powder inhaler (DPI)**
- a **metered-dose inhaler (MDI)**, *often used with a spacer*
- a **pill or liquid taken by mouth**



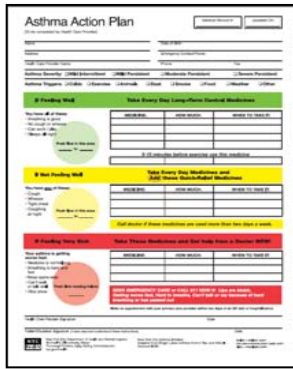
A **Nebulizer** is a machine that produces asthma medicine as a mist. A **DPI** is an inhaler that gives a set dosage of medicine in a powdered form. The **MDI** is the most common, quickest and easiest way to take asthma medicine. The **MDI** is a small can that contains medicine you can inhale. Asthma medicine can have side effects. Ask your doctor what the side effects of your medicine may be.

Asthma and Children

If your child starts coughing after running or when he or she is crying, tell your doctor. These could be symptoms of asthma. Some children have asthma when they are young, but as they get older, their asthma disappears. If you have school-age children with asthma, please tell the school. Request a **Medication Form** and give them a copy of the **Asthma Action Plan**. Then, if your child has an asthma attack while in school, the teacher or school nurse will know what to do to help your child.

What is the asthma action plan?

The **Asthma Action Plan** helps you and your child keep asthma under control, by telling you what to do in different asthma-related situations. The **Asthma Action Plan** must be completed by your doctor.

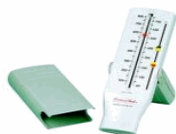


It has three zones: red, yellow, and green. The green zone tells you that you are breathing **OK**. The yellow zone

tells you that your asthma is getting worse.

The red zone is the danger zone: **call your doctor!** To get an **Asthma Action Plan**, call or see your doctor. **All children should have an Asthma Action Plan.**

To help control your asthma you should also have a **Peak Flow Meter**, which is a device that measures how well you are breathing. Ask your doctor how to use it.



Remember:

1. Ask your doctor which medicine is best for you and take it as instructed.
2. Always have your medicine with you.
3. Know your triggers and avoid them.
4. Know when and how to treat your asthma symptoms.
5. Get an Asthma Action Plan.
6. Use a Peak Flow Meter.

Follow these simple rules and you can control your asthma and live a healthy life.

For more information on asthma, call:

Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America

1-800-727-8462

MetroPlus Care Management Action Line

1-800-579-9798

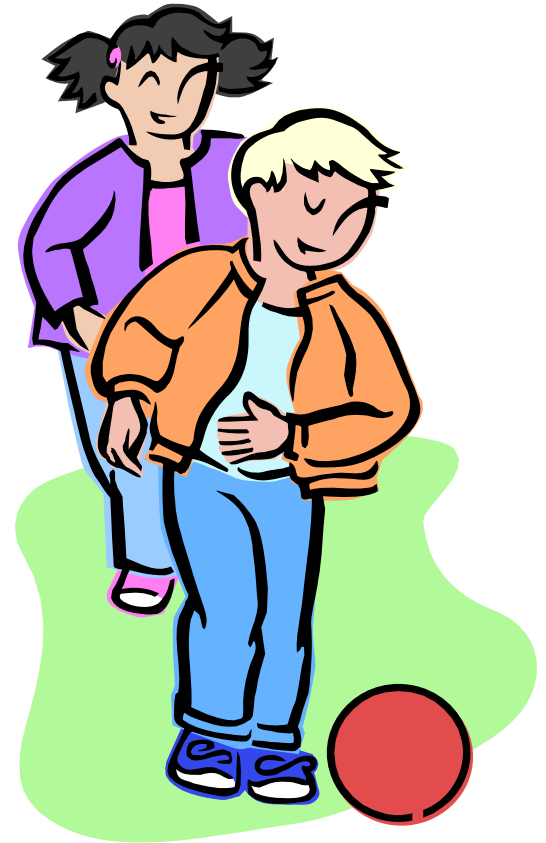
The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your doctor may recommend based on individual facts about you.

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