

What is asthma?

Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs. Asthma affects 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 is an asthma attack?

During an attack, the lungs become swollen. The amount of air going in and out of the lungs is reduced. This produces a lot of mucus that clogs the lungs and makes breathing harder causing an asthma attack. Asthma attacks can be mild or severe.

What causes an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is caused by something called an **Asthma Trigger**. An Asthma trigger 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 amount of attacks you have. Asthma medicine can be taken by using:

- **a nebulizer,**
- **a dry power inhaler (DPI)**
- **a metered-dose inhaler (MDI)**
- **a pill or liquid 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 powered 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 inhale. Asthma medicines can have side effects. Ask your doctor what are the side effects of your medicine.

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. There are children who have asthma when they are young, and as they grow, 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**. This way if your child has an asthma attack while in school the teacher or school nurse will know what to do to help your child.

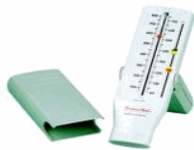
What is the asthma action plan?

The **Asthma Action Plan** helps you and your child keep asthma in control.



The **Asthma Action Plan** tells you what to do when you or your child have no symptoms, when you or your child have symptoms or in an emergency. 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 you may have asthma symptoms. The red zone is the danger zone. Get help, **call 911**. Call or visit your doctor and ask for an **Asthma Action Plan**. **All children should have an Asthma Action Plan.**

To help control your asthma you should also have a **Peak Flow**



Meter. A peak flow meter is a device that measures how well you are breathing. Ask your doctor how to use the peak flow meter.

Remember:

1. Ask your doctor which medicine is best for you and take them 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 at

1-800-727-8462

MetroPlus Health Plan AsthmaPlus Program

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.

MetroPlus Health Plan
160 Water Street, New York, NY 10038

Member information:
1-800-303-9626

For information about MetroPlus Health Plan:
1-800-475-METRO

LIVING WITH ASTHMA

