



## PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

### Goals of Asthma Management

Your physician will outline the goals of asthma management:

**Be able to monitor your asthma and make adjustments in your treatment on your own, but know when to contact your physician.**

**Be active without having asthma symptoms. This includes participating in exercise and sports.**

**Sleep through the night without having asthma symptoms.**

**Prevent asthma episodes.**

**Have the best possible peak flow rate.**

**Avoid side effects from asthma medications.**

**Use the minimum amount of medications to achieve these goals.**

Your physician or provider will cover significant points of asthma management that include:

- Prevention of episodes is an important goal of management. Prevention may include:
  - ✓ Avoiding allergens (especially in the indoor environment) if you are allergic
  - ✓ Around-the-clock medication treatment for a short time
  - ✓ Use of anti-inflammatory medications to reverse and prevent inflammation
  - ✓ Know the signs of an approaching attack
  - ✓ Early intervention when episodes do occur to reduce the likelihood of developing severe airway narrowing
- Treatment requires a continuous-care approach to control symptoms, prevent episodes, and reduce chronic airway inflammation.
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### Asthma Management Plan

*Developing an asthma management plan for your asthma that is acceptable to you and controls your symptoms is the biggest challenge of asthma care. Meeting this challenge requires close collaboration with your physician and careful tailoring of the asthma management plan to your requirements and concerns.*

Your physician or provider will work with you to develop an individualized asthma management plan:

- Main features of an asthma management plan:
  - ✓ Continuous-care approach
  - ✓ Total-care approach addresses control of symptoms, prevention of symptoms, and reduction of chronic airway inflammation
  - ✓ Early treatment approach provides for treatment at the earliest sign of an episode
  - ✓ Plan of action to manage an episode of asthma [**Sample Asthma Action Plan**]
- The asthma management plan needs to be individualized to:
  - ✓ Your age
  - ✓ The severity and pattern of your asthma
  - ✓ Your daily routine
  - ✓ Past response to therapies
- The plan should be simple and use as few medications taken as few times a day as possible.
- The rationale for the types and uses of medications (relievers: short-acting inhaled bronchodilators; and controllers: anti-inflammatory drugs) will be explained.
- Your plan should be consistent with the goals of therapy.

## Tips for a Successful Asthma Management Plan

- Understand written instructions on the medications and how to use the medications correctly.
- Go over each step with your physician.
- The asthma management plan needs to be as simple as possible, that is, with as few medications prescribed as few times a day as possible.
- Have your physician demonstrate how to use the inhaler.
- Enlist family support for adherence to the asthma management plan.
- Talk to your physician early on about fears and concerns about asthma and asthma medications.
- Determine whether you can afford to buy the medications prescribed, and if not, consider alternative therapies or payment methods
- Identify problems with your medication plan by asking:
  - ✓ What problems do you have taking this medication?
  - ✓ When you feel better, do you sometimes stop taking the medication?
  - ✓ If you feel worse when you take the medication, do you sometimes stop taking it?
  - ✓

**Your physician will provide you with written and verbal instructions on the use of each medication required to treat your asthma:**

- The name of each medication prescribed
- The purpose (for inflammation, cough, and wheeze)
- The dose and frequency of administration
- When to begin taking the medication
- Guidelines for changing the dose or adding medications
- When to discontinue the medications (if appropriate)
- Special instructions for taking the medications, if needed (eg, when to report side effects, what to do if a dose is forgotten, etc)
- Tips to administer the medication to children (if appropriate)
- Discuss your concerns and fears about the safety of medication for asthma with your physician.

**The following issues should be discussed with your physician:**

- What worries you about the medication?
- What is your biggest concern or fear about the medication?
- Side effects of steroids
- Additive properties
- Toxicity
- Loss of effectiveness over time
- Effect on the body and the growth and development of children

