



PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Steps to Manage Asthma Episodes

Know your warning signs and peak flow zones so you can begin treatment early.

Take the correct amount of medication at the times the physician has stated. If the asthma action plan includes increased dosage or a second medication to be used during episodes, take it as prescribed. Always call your physician if you need to take more medication than the physician ordered or if the medications are not working.

Remove yourself or the child from the trigger if you know what it is. Treatment does not work as well if the patient stays around the trigger.

Keep calm and relaxed. Family members must stay calm and relaxed too.

Rest.

Observe yourself or the child by noting changes in body signs such as wheezing, coughing, trouble breathing, and posture. If you have a peak flow meter, measure peak flow number 5 to 15 minutes after each treatment to see if peak flow is improving.

Review the list below for signs to seek emergency medical care for asthma. They include:

- **Your wheeze, cough, or shortness of breath gets worse, even after the medication has been given and had time to work.** Most inhaled bronchodilator produce an effect within 5 to 10 minutes. Discuss with your physician the time your medications take to work.
- **Your peak flow number goes down, or does not improve after treatment with bronchodilators,** or drops to 50% or less of personal best. Discuss this peak flow level with your physician.
 - **Your breathing gets difficult.** Signs of this are:
 - Your chest and neck pull or suck in with each breath.
 - You are hunched over.
 - You are struggling to breathe.
 - **You have trouble walking or talking.**
 - **You stop playing or working and cannot start again.**
 - **Your lips or fingernails are gray or blue. If this happens, go to the Emergency Department now!**

Keep your important information for seeking emergency care handy.

Call a family member, friend, or neighbor to help you if needed.

Immediately call a clinic, physician's office, or hospital for help if needed.

DO NOT DO THE FOLLOWING:

- **Do not** drink a lot of water. Just drink normal amounts.
- **Do not** breathe warm, moist air from a shower.
- **Do not** re-breathe into a paper bag held over the nose.
- **Do not** use over-the-counter cold remedies without first calling your physician.
- **Do not** ignore your symptoms.

ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Name _____

Date _____

It is important in managing asthma to keep track of your symptoms, medications, and peak expiratory flow (PEF).

You can use the colors of a traffic light to help learn your asthma medications:

A. **Green** means All CLEAR use preventive (anti-inflammatory) medication

B. **Yellow** means CAUTION use quick-relief (short-acting bronchodilator) medication in addition to the preventive medication.

C. **Red** means MEDICAL ALERT! Get help from a doctor.

a. Your GREEN ZONE is _____ 80% to 100% of your personal best. ALL CLEAR!

Breathing is good with no cough, wheeze, or chest tightness during work, school, exercise, or play.

ACTION:

Continue with medications listed in your daily self-management plan.

b. Your YELLOW ZONE is _____ 60% to less than 80% of your personal best. CAUTION!

Asthma symptoms are present (cough, wheeze, or chest tightness).

Your peak flow number drops below _____ or you notice:

- Increased need for inhaled quick-relief medication
- Increased asthma symptoms upon awakening
- Awakening at night with asthma symptoms
- _____.

ACTIONS:

- Take _____ puffs of your quick-relief (bronchodilator) medication.
- Repeat _____ times.
- Take _____ puffs of _____ (anti-inflammatory) _____ times/day.
- Begin/increase treatment with oral steroids:
 - Take _____ mg of _____ every a.m. _____ p.m. _____
- Call your doctor (phone) _____ or emergency department _____.

c. Your RED ZONE is _____ 60% or less of your best. MEDICAL ALERT!!

Your peak flow number drops below _____, or you continue to get worse after increasing treatment according to the directions above.

ACTIONS:

- Take _____ puffs of your quick-relief (bronchodilator) medication.
- Repeat _____ times.
- Begin/increase treatment with oral steroids: Take _____ mg now.
- Call your doctor now (phone) _____. If you cannot contact your doctor, go directly to the emergency department (phone) _____.
- Other important phone numbers for transportation _____.

AT ANY TIME, CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- Asthma symptoms worsen while you are taking oral steroids
- Inhaled bronchodilator treatments are not lasting 4 hours
- Your peak flow number remains or falls below _____ in spite of following the plan

ASTHMA SELF-MANAGEMENT PLAN

for _____

YOUR TREATMENT GOALS

- Be free from severe symptoms day and night, including sleeping through the night
- Have the best possible lung function
- Be able to participate fully in any activities of your choice
- Not miss work or school because of asthma symptoms
- Not need emergency department visits or hospitalizations for asthma
- Use asthma medications to control asthma with as few side effects as possible

Add personal goals here:

YOUR DAILY MEDICATIONS

Daily Medication	How Much To Take	When To Take It
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

RECORD DAILY SELF-MONITORING ACTIONS in the asthma diary your physician gives you.

Peak flow: At least every morning when you wake up, before taking your medication, measure your peak flow, and record it in your diary. Bring these records to your next appointment with your physician.

Symptoms: Note if you had asthma symptoms (shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, or cough) and rate how severe they were during the day or night: mild, moderate, severe.

Use of your quick-relief inhaler (bronchodilator): Keep a record of the number of puffs you needed to use each day or night to control your symptoms.

Actual use of daily medications:

Activity restriction: