



WINTER FOCUS ON ASTHMA

Winter means cold and flu season has come again. If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of having complications if you get the flu. Do not take that chance—get a flu shot every fall. Talk to your doctor about whether a pneumonia shot is also appropriate.

You Have an Active Role in Asthma Care

You and your doctor are a team working together to better manage your asthma. You should:

- Take your controller medicine every day as directed by your doctor.
- Talk to your doctor if you use your quick-relief (rescue) medicine more than two days a week.
- Bring a list of questions with you to the office visit. Ask questions about what you do not understand.
- Give clear information to your doctor about your asthma symptoms.
- Listen closely and carefully to what your doctor says.
- Talk to your doctor about scheduling “asthma only” office visits, and keep your appointments.
- Remember that good hand washing is one of the most important ways to decrease the risk of getting a common cold virus.

Your Asthma Action Plan—Help Manage Your Asthma

Develop an Asthma Action Plan with your doctor and follow it. It will tell you:

- When and how to take your medicines.
- When to call your doctor.
- What to do in an emergency.

Goals of Asthma Care

The symptoms of asthma can change from day to day or month to month. You can feel fine one minute and have trouble breathing the next.

The goal of a good asthma management plan is to help you manage your asthma. Everyone with asthma should have a management plan that helps them:

- ✓ Have few or no asthma symptoms during the day and night.
- ✓ Reduce asthma flare-ups and visits to the emergency room (ER) or hospital.
- ✓ Have no limits on activities such as no school or work missed.
- ✓ Use a quick-relief (rescue) inhaler less often.
- ✓ Have little or no bad effects from your medicines.

Take an active role in your asthma care. Work with your doctor to keep your asthma well controlled.

Asthma and Smoking

Did You Know That Smoking Can Make Your Asthma Worse?

Smoking is a common trigger of asthma symptoms for people with asthma. If you smoke, it is critical that you stop.



Here Are Some Tips to Help You Stop Smoking:

- Make every effort to stop—even if you could not stop before. Keep trying!
- Talk to your doctor about medicines to help you quit smoking.
- Create a quit plan.
- Set a quit date.
- Enroll in a quit-smoking class or program.
- Find out what makes you want to smoke. Plan how you can avoid these times or how you can deal with them without smoking.
- Reduce your exposure to other smokers.

Secondhand Smoke

Smoke coming from other people who smoke (secondhand smoke) can also be an important trigger. If you have a child with asthma, remember to keep him or her away from secondhand smoke, too. Make sure that your child is not exposed to smoking at day care.

How to Ask People Not to Smoke Around You

Telling friends or family members that their smoking makes your asthma worse can be hard. But if you have asthma, it is important to let people know how cigarette or cigar smoke affects you.

- Most people don't know that smoke can make asthma worse.
- Suggest that they smoke outdoors.

Asthma and Depression

You may feel sad or “down” if asthma limits your daily life. If these feelings do not go away, talk to your doctor.

Do You Have Symptoms of Depression?

Depression affects people in many ways. Talk to your doctor if you have 5 or more of these symptoms that last for 2 or more weeks:

- Feel sad or down
- Do not care about things you liked before
- Eat more or eat less
- Feel tired
- Feel anxious
- Cannot think or make up your mind
- Feel like you are bad or not worth much
- Sleep too much or too little
- Think about dying or killing yourself

Getting Help With Depression May Help You Feel Better

- Your doctor may prescribe medicines to help with your depression.
- If you take a depression medicine, make sure all your doctors know about it.
- Talk to your doctor before stopping or changing any of your medicines.