



ASTHMA CARE

Taking Care of Asthma

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease of the airways in the lungs. No one knows why some people get asthma and some do not. There is no cure. But, asthma can be controlled.

As we breathe, air travels in and out of our lungs through airways. With asthma the airways become very inflamed and swollen. This causes the lungs to make extra fluid. The muscles around the airways also tighten. All this makes it hard to breath. This is called a flare-up or asthma attack.

What are the symptoms of asthma?

- **Shortness of breath.**
You feel like you can't breathe fully.
- **Tightness in the chest.**
You feel like a strap is around your chest.
- **Wheezing.**
You hear a whistle sound when you breathe out.
- **Coughing.**
The cough lasts more than a week and is constant, especially at night.



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How do I take care of asthma?

- **Know your triggers** such as smoke, dust, grass, or exercise.
- **Work with your doctor**
 - ❑ Find and stay with a doctor for regular asthma care.
 - ❑ Request an asthma action plan. This plan tells you what to do during a flare up. It also tells you what to do in an emergency. Want an asthma action plan form to take to your doctor? Request one at 510-747-4577.
 - ❑ Take your medicines as prescribed. Make sure you understand how and when to take medicines. Ask questions! Your doctor wants you to understand your medicines.
 - ❑ Check with your doctor before using home remedies or over the counter medicines.

What medicines do I take for asthma?

There are two kinds of asthma medicines. The doctor may give you one or both kinds. Do not mix them up. They do different things to the body.

- **Long-term controller** (Such as QVAR). This medicine helps keep the airways from being inflamed. It also lowers the chance of a flare-up. Use a controller even when you feel good. A controller helps to keep you feeling well.
- **Rescue medicine or quick reliever** (Such as Albuterol). Even when taking a controller, you may have a flare-up. Once a flare up starts, use a rescue medicine to stop it. Use rescue medicine before exercise or play to help prevent flare-ups.

What about Peak Flow Readings?

A peak flow meter measures the airflow in the lungs. Your asthma plan will be based on your best air flow. Use the peak flow meter to catch a breathing problem before you begin to feel other symptoms.

You don't have to do this alone!

To find out more about asthma care call Alliance Health Programs at **510-747-4577**.

Toll-Free: 1-877-371-2222;
CRS/TTY: 711 or 1-800-735-2929;
8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday;

Alliance CompleteCare (HMO SNP)
Members please call:
Toll-Free: 1-877-585-7526;
CRS/TTY: 711 or 1-800-735-2929
8 a.m. to 8 p.m. seven days a week.

www.alamedaalliance.org
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