

Living With Asthma: Your Inhaler and Action Plan Guide

Medical-Surgical · Respiratory / Pulmonology

Asthma makes the airways in your lungs swollen and narrow, so breathing gets hard. Your inhalers and your action plan keep you breathing well.

Know your two kinds of medicine

- **Daily (controller) inhaler:** calms swelling in your airways. Use it every day, even when you feel well.
- **Rescue (quick-relief) inhaler:** opens your airways in minutes. Keep it with you.
- Some people use one inhaler for both. Follow your plan.
- After a steroid inhaler, rinse your mouth with water and spit.

Use your inhaler with a spacer

- Shake the inhaler if the label says to. Put it into the spacer.
- Breathe out all the way. Close your lips around the mouthpiece.
- Press once. Breathe in slowly and deeply. Hold your breath for up to 10 seconds.
- Wait between puffs as the label says.

Check your peak flow

- Your personal best: _____.
- **Green (80 to 100%):** keep taking your daily medicine.
- **Yellow (50 to 79%):** use your rescue inhaler and follow your yellow steps.

- **Red (under 50%):** use your rescue inhaler now and get help.

Avoid triggers and watch your control

- Stay away from smoke, vaping, dust, mold, and pet dander.
- Get a flu shot every year.
- Needing your rescue inhaler more than 2 days a week means poor control. Do not count use before exercise.

Call your provider today if you have

- Peak flow in the yellow zone that does not get better
- Rescue inhaler use more than 2 days a week
- Waking at night with cough or wheezing

Call 911 or your local emergency number if you have

- Peak flow in the red zone that stays red after your rescue inhaler
- Trouble walking or talking because you cannot breathe
- Blue or gray lips or fingernails
- Skin pulling in at your neck or between your ribs when you breathe

This handout supports, not replaces, advice from your own nurse or doctor.

Online: ncllexpace.com/patient-education/asthma-inhalers-action-plan/patient

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