



Living Well with Asthma

Keep track of your asthma symptoms

Asthma symptoms can differ for each person. With asthma, there is always a little bit of swelling inside the airways of your lungs. This makes the airways extra sensitive when exposed to viruses, allergens, irritants or even emotions.

What should you track? Start with:

Daytime symptoms. Note how often your asthma bothers you during the day — and what symptoms you have. Are you coughing or wheezing? Are you short of breath? Is your chest tight? Do these occur only once in a while or often?

Nighttime symptoms. Are you ever woken up by asthma? Coughing with or without mucus may be more common at night. Make a note of how often this happens.

Your inhaler use. How often do you need your quick-relief inhaler? If there's been an increase or you need to refill it more than twice a year, let your doctor know.

How you feel when being active. Does your asthma act up when you do normal things, like walking or climbing stairs? That could be a sign it's getting worse.

Peak flow meter. Your doctor may also ask you to use a peak flow meter to track your results. This is a simple, inexpensive device that measures how well you can push air out of your lungs. Asthma action plans often include the use of a peak flow meter to help you better manage your asthma. Ask your doctor if this may be helpful for you.

Take your notes to each doctor visit and go over your asthma action plan. It should tell you what to do when your asthma is acting up.

Source: American Lung Association (www.lung.org)



5 ways to take charge:

- 1** Learn all you can about it at American Lung Association (www.lung.org).
- 2** Work with your doctor on an asthma care management plan.
- 3** Take your medications as prescribed.
- 4** Avoid asthma triggers like smoke, vape, mold, pests and insects, pet hair and dander, dust mites and air pollution.
- 5** Aim for healthy habits like exercise, eating right and getting enough sleep.

Contact us

Mercy Care
4750 S. 44th Place, Suite 150
Phoenix, AZ 85040

Member Services:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879 (TTY **711**),
Monday through Friday,
7 a.m. to 6 p.m.

ACC-RBHA members with SMI:

602-586-1841 or
1-800-564-5465 (TTY **711**),
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

24-hour nurse line:

602-263-3000 or
1-800-624-3879

Additional contacts:

<https://www.mercycareaz.org/contact-us.html>

Contract services are funded under contract with the State of Arizona. This newsletter contains general health information that should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

If you would no longer like to receive this mailing, please call Member Services.

Mercy Care is administered by Aetna Medicaid Administrators, LLC, an Aetna company.

mercycareaz.org

Understanding your asthma medicines

If you have asthma, one key to managing it is to understand your medicines. There are two main types. One controls your symptoms over the long term. The other provides quick relief.

Quick-relief medicines

If your symptoms get worse, these fast-acting medicines can help you breathe again. They often come in inhalers. Some relax the muscles around your airways. Others reduce swelling inside your airways. Your doctor can help you know which type is right for you and show you how to use it.

Long-term control medicines

Most people with asthma also take a daily medicine. These can help prevent flare-ups. They may relax your airways and control swelling over time. They often come as pills or inhalers.

Other long-term medicines aim to change how your body responds to allergy triggers. These might be pills or shots given in your doctor's office.

Know your meds

To get the most from your medicines, you need to take them just as your doctor directs. Your asthma action plan can tell you when and how to take them to keep you breathing well.

Sources: American Lung Association (www.lung.org); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

If you smoke or vape, ask your doctor for help quitting. Or call the Arizona Smokers Helpline (ASHLine) directly at **1-800-556-6222** or visit **www.ashline.org**. It may take a few tries, but it's one of the best things you can do for your lungs and heart.

Don't forget!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Care Management

Need help? A care manager can tell you more about your condition. They can connect you with a provider too. This is a covered service for members with certain health needs. Call Member Services and ask for the Care Management Department.