**Asthma Action Plan**

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- Call 311 to get one for your doctor to fill out.

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**More Information and Help**

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- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/asthma](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma)
- American Lung Association of the City of New York: [www.alany.org](http://www.alany.org)
- American Academy of Pediatrics: [www.aap.org/healthtopics/asthma.cfm](http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/asthma.cfm)
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology: [www.aaaai.org/patients/gallery](http://www.aaaai.org/patients/gallery)
- Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America: [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)
- World Trade Center Health: [nyc.gov/911healthinfo](http://nyc.gov/911healthinfo)

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**New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene**

125 Worth Street, Room 1047, CN 33
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Prepared in cooperation with:
Division of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
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Asthma Program

KICK ASTHMA

Take charge and control it

Have a regular doctor and an ‘Asthma Action Plan.’
Take controller medicine every day for persistent asthma.
Stay away from asthma triggers, especially cigarette smoke.

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What is asthma?

- Asthma is a lung disease that makes it hard to breathe.
- Asthma symptoms include coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and chest tightness.
- People can develop asthma at any age, but it usually starts in childhood.

You can control it.

- Asthma is a long-term (chronic) condition. People have it for many years.
- There is no cure – but you can take charge and learn to control it!

Have a regular doctor

If you have asthma, see your doctor regularly, even if you’re feeling well.

- Let the doctor know if asthma interferes with sleep, work, school, play or exercise.
- Tell your doctor how often you have symptoms, such as coughing or wheezing, and how often you use your quick-relief inhaler.

Use the right medicines

Spacers are important.

Many asthma medicines are inhaled. If you use a metered dose inhaler or pump, be sure to use a spacer.

Use controller medicines to prevent attacks.

- People with persistent asthma should use controller medicines.
- You have persistent asthma if you have:
  - Daytime symptoms more than twice a week, or
  - Nighttime symptoms more than twice a month.
- Controllers must be taken every day, even when you feel well.
- The most effective controllers are called “inhaled corticosteroids.” They are prescribed in small doses and are safe to use.
- Inhaled corticosteroids are NOT the same as anabolic steroids that some people use unsafely to build muscles.

Use quick-relief medicines to relieve symptoms.

- Carry quick-relief medicine all the time in case of an emergency.
- Unlike controllers, quick-relief medicines don’t prevent attacks.

Allergy control.

Your doctor may also recommend medicine for hay fever and other allergies that can trigger asthma.

Lead a healthy, active life!

With asthma under control, you can:

- Participate fully in sports and other physical activities.
- Not miss school or work because of asthma.
- Sleep through the night.
- Not have severe asthma symptoms.
- Not need to go to the emergency room or be hospitalized because of asthma.

Watch out for triggers

- Different people have different triggers. Learning what triggers your asthma is important for control.
- Colds and upper respiratory infections are major triggers for children.
- Other triggers can include furry pets (especially cats), cockroaches, mice, dust mites, cold weather, strong fumes, mold and mildew, and pollen.

Take charge!

- If you have persistent asthma, take controller medicine every day to prevent asthma attacks.
- Establish a smoke-free home. If you smoke, call 311 for free help to quit.
- Get a flu shot every year.
- Reduce clutter, and get rid of roaches and mice safely (without using sprays or strong pesticides).
- Vacuum rugs, curtains and furniture, and wash bedding in hot water.
- When pollen or air pollution rises, close your windows. Use an air conditioner if possible.
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Tobacco smoke is a serious asthma trigger.

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