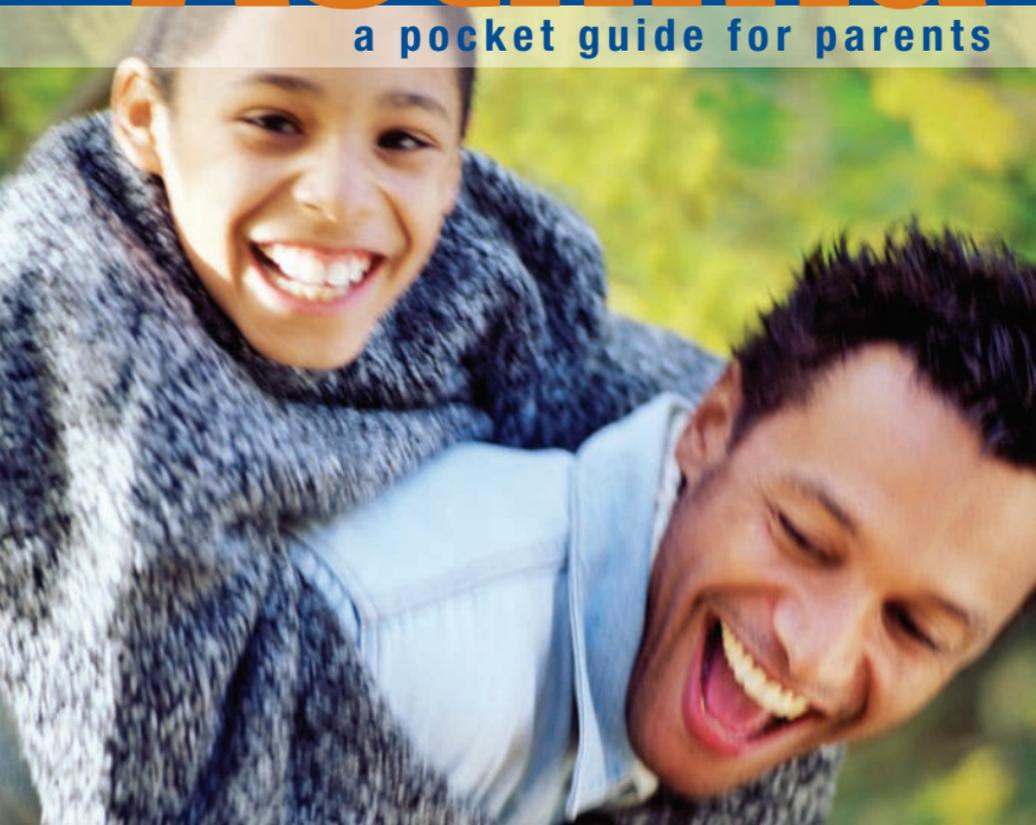


# My child has **Asthma**

a pocket guide for parents



**NYC**  
Health

EAST HARLEM  
**ASTHMA CENTER**  
OF EXCELLENCE

**GO GREEN**  
EAST HARLEM!  
An Initiative of Manhattan Borough President Scott M. Stringer

# Emergency information

## Your doctor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours: \_\_\_ am - \_\_\_ pm

## Your child's doctor

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours: \_\_\_ am - \_\_\_ pm

## Pharmacy

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours: \_\_\_ am - \_\_\_ pm

**23rd Police Precinct: 212-860-6411**

**25th Police Precinct: 212-860-6511**

**Poison Control Hotline: 212-222-1222**

## Friend/family member to call in case of emergency

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

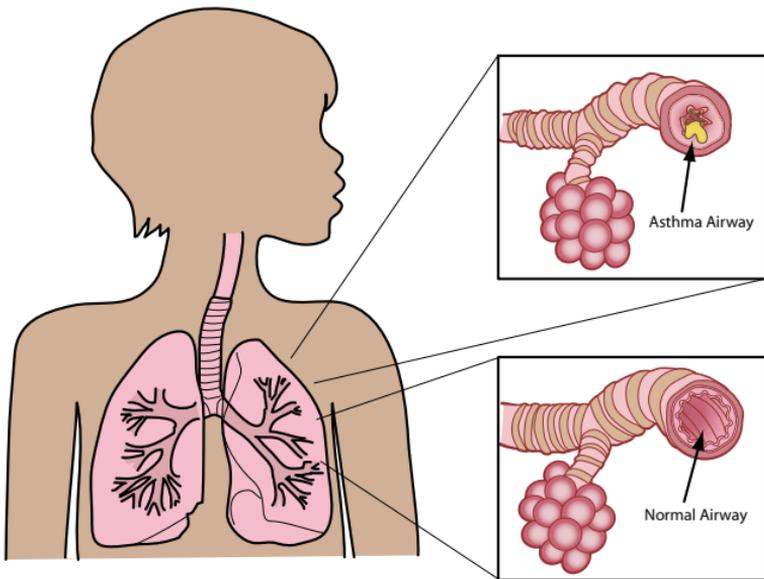
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

# What is asthma?

**Asthma is a lung disease that makes it difficult to breathe. A person with asthma has:**

- Swelling of the airways
- Mucus in the airways
- Tightening of muscles around the airways



**Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. People with asthma can live active, normal lives.**

# How can I keep my child's asthma under control?

- Schedule regular visits with your child's doctor.
- Follow the asthma action plan that your doctor provided.
- Make sure that your child takes asthma medicines as indicated.
- Keep your home free of things that may trigger your child's asthma – like tobacco smoke, cockroaches, strong smells and pets.
- Make sure your child stays active.



# You and your child's doctor

Developing a relationship with your child's doctor is important. By becoming an active partner in your child's care, you and the doctor can – together – come up with the best plan for controlling your child's asthma.



## **Your doctor should:**

- Explain your child's asthma in terms that you understand.
- Explain how to give your child his asthma medicine.
- Talk to you with respect.
- Answer your questions.
- Speak in a language you understand (or arrange for someone to translate).
- Be available to talk to you by phone.
- Give you a telephone number to call if you need to reach a doctor when the office is closed.

## **You should:**

- Make a list of questions before your child's appointment and talk about them with your doctor during the visit.
- Clearly describe your child's asthma symptoms.
- Ask the doctor to explain more clearly if you don't understand something that the doctor is saying.
- Bring along the medicines your child is taking and show them to the doctor.
- Share your beliefs and ideas about your child's asthma.



# Follow your child's asthma action plan

Your doctor should complete an asthma action plan for your child. This written plan will help you:

- Determine how well controlled your child's asthma is.
- Know **which** asthma medicines to give, **how much** to give and **when** to give them.
- Know when to call your doctor or take your child to the emergency room.
- Know how well your child is breathing based on the peak flow meter reading.

If your child does not have an asthma action plan, ask the doctor to complete one at your next visit. Call us at **1-888-247-8811** if you need a copy of this form.

**Asthma Action Plan**  
(To be completed by Health Care Provider)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Emergency Contact/Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Health Care Provider Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

**Asthma Severity:**  Intermittent  Mild Persistent  Moderate Persistent  Severe Persistent

**Asthma Triggers:**  Colds  Exercise  Animals  Dust  Smoke  Food  Weather  Other \_\_\_\_\_

**If Feeling Well (Green Zone)**  
*You have all of these:*  
• Breathing is good  
• No cough or wheezing  
• Can walk/playing  
• Sleeps all night

Peak flow is in the **green** zone \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Take Every Day Long – Take Quicker Medications**

MEDICINE:	HOW MUCH:	WHEN TO TAKE IT:

8-15 minutes before exercise use this medicine

**If Not Feeling Well (Yellow Zone)**  
*You have 2 of these:*  
• Cough  
• Wheeze  
• Night cough  
• Coughing at night

Peak flow is in the **yellow** zone \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

**Take Every Day Medicines and Add These Quick-Relief Medicines**

MEDICINE:	HOW MUCH:	WHEN TO TAKE IT:

Call doctor if these medicines are used more than two days a week.

**If Feeling Very Sick (Red Zone)**  
*Your asthma is getting worse fast:*  
• Medicine is not helping  
• Breathing is hard  
• Lips or nail beds are blue  
• Pulse seems weak  
• Can't walk or talk well  
• Rises from bed

Peak flow reading below \_\_\_\_\_

**Take These Medicines and Get help from a Doctor NOW!**

MEDICINE:	HOW MUCH:	WHEN TO TAKE IT:

**SEEK EMERGENCY CARE or CALL 911 NOW!** *Low or No Peak, Ongoing Wheeze, Hard to Breathe, Can't Walk or Talk because of hard breathing or has passed out.*

Make an appointment with your primary care provider within two days of an ER visit or hospitalization.

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**NYC** New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
Division of Community Health and Safety  
Asthma Action Plan (AAP) Form  
Revised 09/16

New York City Asthma Institute  
Asthma Action Plan (AAP) Form and SGLS  
Revised 09/16  
Phone: 212-312-2200  
www.nycasthma.org

DOB: \_\_\_\_\_  
PHYSICIAN: \_\_\_\_\_  
HEALTH PROFESSIONAL: \_\_\_\_\_  
HSA 500011 01 01

**COPY FOR PATIENT**

# What are your child's asthma triggers?

Asthma triggers are things that can bring on asthma symptoms. Here are some common triggers:

- Smoke
- Cockroaches
- Mold
- Dust
- Dust mites
- Colds and infections
- Weather changes
- Food allergies
- Pets
- Pollen
- Pollution
- Mice



Many children with asthma also have allergies. Asthma symptoms can be triggered by these allergies. **Ask your doctor if your child has allergies.**

## How can I reduce my child's contact with triggers?

### Secondhand smoke

- If you smoke, ask your doctor for help quitting and call 311 for more information. Ask family members to quit smoking, too.
- Do not allow smoking in your home.



# Know your child's symptoms

Asthma symptoms can differ from one child to the next. Here are some common symptoms. Your child may experience some or all of these symptoms:

## **Coughing**

A regular cough or a sound in your child's chest. It may keep your child awake at night.

## **Wheezing**

A whistling sound like air coming out of a balloon.

## **Shortness of breath**

When your child is having a hard time breathing.

## **Tired**

Tires quickly, even when getting enough sleep.

## **Tightness in the chest**

Chest feels tight or heavy. Your child may say that it hurts or feels like something is putting pressure on the chest.

# Asthma medicines

There are 2 main types of asthma medicines.

**Controller Medicines** (also known as inhaled corticosteroids) are taken **every day** when a child is diagnosed with persistent asthma or symptoms occur often. These medicines help reduce swelling and mucus in the airways. Commonly used controllers include:

- Flovent
- Pulmicort
- Advair
- Symbicort
- Asmanex



**Reliever Medicines** (albuterol) should be taken when your child has asthma symptoms or when you expect your child to be in contact with an asthma trigger. This medicine helps to relax the muscles surrounding the airways so that they stay open and wide.

In the asthma action plan provided by your child's doctor, the medicines your child needs to take and when she needs to take them are described.

## Animal dander

- Keep pets with fur or hair out of the home.
- If it is not possible to keep the pet outdoors, keep the pet out of your child's bedroom and keep the bedroom door closed.



## Dust and dust mites

- Remove carpets and furniture covered with cloth, when possible.
- Use wet cloths to wipe away dust.

## Cockroaches

- Keep all food out of the bedroom.
- Keep food and garbage in closed containers and never leave food out.
- Clean regularly, using mild soaps and cleaning products such as white vinegar, baking soda and lemon for a fresh smell. Avoid strong-smelling cleaning products containing ammonia or bleach, as these may trigger your child's asthma.
- Caulk cracks and holes where roaches can enter and hide.



## Mold and mildew

- Fix leaking faucets, pipes or other sources of water.
- Clean moldy surfaces.
- Use air conditioners.
- Avoid humidifiers.

# Staying active when you have asthma

All children, including those with asthma, need to stay active. Don't let asthma get in the way of your child's need for exercise.

- Ask your child's doctor whether your child should take a reliever medicine before participating in sports, gym class or other types of physical activity (for example, playing in the park or riding a bike).
- Review the exercise section of your child's asthma action plan with the doctor.
- Give a copy of the asthma action plan to your child's teachers and coaches so that they understand your child's medicine needs.





## Get support from others

Caring for a child with asthma can be stressful. Here are some tips for managing stress:

- Find someone you can talk to. Reach out to a family member, a friend or a neighbor who can listen to your concerns and offer you some support.
- Work on an art project or puzzle with your child.
- Watch a movie.
- Listen to music.
- Go for a walk.
- Come talk to us at the East Harlem Asthma Center of Excellence – and ask about one of our support groups.

# Common asthma terms

<b>Asthma Episode</b>	When airways swell, mucus fills airways and muscles around the airways tighten – making it difficult to breathe. Also known as an asthma attack.
<b>Bronchioles</b>	Airways inside the lungs.
<b>Bronchodilator</b>	Quick relief medicine to be taken when a child has asthma symptoms or 1/2 hour before being exposed to a known asthma trigger (for example, before visiting another home with pets).
<b>Dust Mites</b>	Tiny insects found in every home that can cause allergies and trigger asthma symptoms.
<b>Inhaled Corticosteroid</b>	Control medicine used every day as prescribed by the doctor to help reduce swelling and the mucus inside the airways.
<b>Inflammation</b>	Swelling
<b>Peak Flow Meter</b>	A hand-held device that lets you see how well the lungs are working.
<b>Spacer</b>	Plastic tube that attaches to an inhaler and helps deliver medicine to the lungs.
<b>Spirometer</b>	A machine that lets the doctor see, in more detail, how the lungs are working.
<b>Triggers</b>	Things that bring on asthma symptoms.

# During an asthma emergency

If your child has any of these symptoms – and reliever medicine like albuterol isn't making it better – it is an emergency:

- Very hard to breathe
- Trouble talking
- Trouble walking or moving at all
- Blue lips or nails
- Heavy wheezing or coughing

Your child may also experience tightness of the chest and/or dizziness.

## **Quickly take these steps:**

**Step 1:** Call 911 for emergency help.

**Step 2:** Continue to give reliever medicine (albuterol) as directed on your child's written plan.

**Step 3:** Try to calm your child by speaking softly and using comforting words. Help your child to a comfortable sitting position while you wait for the ambulance to arrive.

## Asthma resources

### Local

**East Harlem Asthma Center of Excellence**  
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
161-169 East 110 Street  
(between Lexington and Third Avenues)  
New York, NY 10029  
888-247-8811

### National

**American Lung Association**  
800-LUNGUSA  
lungusa.org

**Asthma Moms**  
asthmamoms.com

**Allergy and Asthma Network  
Mothers of Asthmatics**  
800-878-4403  
breatherville.org