

Discharge Information: Asthma



You were treated in the hospital for asthma. This is a condition that narrows the airways and can make it hard to breathe.

This handout tells you and your caregiver what you need to know about your care in the first weeks at home. Ask your doctor or nurse if there are things you do not understand.

Follow-Up Appointments

Name of Doctor	Date & Time	Phone Number
1.		
2.		
3.		



Eating Plan

Eat your usual foods unless your doctor gave you a special eating plan.

Eat several small meals a day instead of large or heavy meals.



Activity

You may feel tired for a while. Cut down on your energy needs.

- Sit down while you are bathing or getting dressed.
- Arrange your home so that you can do everyday things with less moving and stretching.
- Take short rests, or get help with hard chores.

Return to your usual activity as you feel able.

Stay active and manage your breathing.

- Talk to your doctor if you have breathing problems when you exercise. Your doctor can help you with symptoms.

- Avoid staying outside on days when the pollen or ozone levels are high.
 - These are called code yellow, orange, and red days.
 - Check your local news for air quality alerts.
- Avoid exercising outside if the air is cold. Wear a scarf over your mouth and nose to keep out cold air.

Do not drive or return to work until your doctor says it is OK.



Self-Care

Keep all doctor appointments.

If you will use a nebulizer, have a nurse go over the steps to make sure you do it right.

Help manage your asthma.

- Keep a diary of your breathing problems to show your doctor. Write down any symptoms of an attack or trouble breathing at night.
- Write down what medicines you use and how often you use them.
- Do your breathing exercises as you were taught.
- Use your peak flow meter as you were taught. Keep a diary of the readings to show your doctor.
- Know the warning signs of an asthma attack. Follow your asthma action plan. Talk to your doctor or nurse if you do not have a plan.
- Get a medical ID bracelet, necklace, or card for your wallet that says you have asthma. Carry it at all times.

Avoid things that can trigger an asthma attack.

- Do not smoke or go near places where there is a lot of smoke.
- Do not use cleaners that have perfumy smells, such as orange furniture polish.
- Have someone else clean and vacuum for you. Vacuum at least once a week.
- Prevent mold growth in your home. Fix leaky pipes or other places where water can get into the walls.
- Keep furry pets out of your bedroom or out of the house if possible.

If you smoke, you should stop now. Talk to your doctor about ways to help you quit.



Medicine

When you leave the hospital, you should get:

- A list of all the medicines you should take
- Prescriptions for any new medicines

Take your medicine as your doctor asked you to.

- Talk to your doctor before you stop taking a medicine.
- Keep a list of all the medicines you take. Include your prescription medicines, and vitamins, herbs, and medicines you buy at the store.
- Take the medicine list to every doctor or hospital visit.
- Get the follow-up tests that your doctor orders.

Take your asthma medicine as you were taught.

- Use the rescue medicine when asthma symptoms start. The medicine will start working in a few minutes.
- Take long-term control medicines every day to keep from having asthma attacks. You will feel the full effect of these medicines in a few weeks.

These programs help you pay for prescription medicines if you cannot afford them.

- NeedyMeds. Go to: www.needymeds.org
- Partnership for Prescription Assistance. Go to: www.pparx.org or call 1.888.477.2669.

Check with your doctor to make sure you are up to date on all your vaccines. Ask your doctor if you should have a flu or pneumonia shot.



When to Call for Emergency Help

You have bad asthma problems.

- The rescue medicine does not help.
- You are very short of breath. It makes it hard to speak.
- Your wheezing gets worse quickly.
- You have pain when you breathe.
- Your chest feels tight, and you have a fast heartbeat or you are sweating.
- The people around you notice that you are confused or not thinking clearly.
- Your lips, nose area, or nails turn blue or gray.



When to Call Your Regular Doctor

You have a cough that does not stop.

There is a drop in your peak flow rate.

You have a fever over 100.4 or chills.

You are not able to do the things you usually do, like exercise or go up stairs.

You need to use your rescue medicines more often.

You do not think your daily inhaled medicines work as well.

You have other medical problems.



Learn More

- American Lung Association. Go to: www.lung.org
- American College of Chest Physicians. Go to: www.chestnet.org
- National Institutes of Health. Go to: www.smokefree.gov

This information is general in nature and may not apply to you or your condition. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how to best use this information and how to take care of your medical condition. Be sure to ask your doctor or nurse any questions you might have. This information sheet is not intended to provide or replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Signatures

Patient or Caregiver

Signature

Date

Nurse

Signature

Date

