

Discharge Instructions for Asthma

You have been diagnosed with an asthma attack. With the help of your healthcare provider, you can keep your asthma under control and have less emergency department visits and stays in the hospital.



Managing asthma

- Take your asthma medicines exactly as your provider tells you. Do this even if you feel that your asthma is under control.
- Learn how to monitor your asthma. Some people watch for early changes of symptoms getting worse. Some use a peak flow meter. Your healthcare provider may decide to give you an asthma action plan.
- Be sure to always have a quick-relief inhaler with you. If you were given a prescription, make sure you go to a pharmacy to get it filled as soon as possible.

Controlling asthma triggers

Triggers are those things that make your asthma symptoms worse or cause asthma attacks. Many people with asthma have allergies that can be triggers. Your healthcare provider may have you get allergy testing to find out what you are allergic to. This can help you stay away from triggers.

Dust or dust mites are a common asthma trigger. To avoid dust mites, do the following:

- Use dust-proof covers on your mattress and pillows. Wash the sheets and blankets on your bed once a week in very hot water.
- Don't sleep or lie on cloth-covered cushions or furniture.
- Ask someone else to vacuum and dust your house.
- If you do vacuum and dust yourself, wear a dust mask. You can buy them from the hardware store.
- Use a vacuum with a double-layered bag or HEPA (high-efficiency particulate air)

filter.

Pets with fur or feathers are triggers for some people. If you must have pets, take these precautions:

- Keep pets out of your bedroom and off your bed. Keep the bedroom door closed.
- Cover the air vents in your bedroom with heavy material to filter the air.
- Don't use carpets or cloth-covered furniture in your home. If this is not possible, keep pets out of rooms with these items.
- Have someone bathe your pets every week. And brush them often.

If you smoke, do your best to quit.

- Enroll in a stop-smoking program to increase your chance of success.
- Ask your healthcare provider about medicines or other methods to help you quit.
- Ask family members to quit smoking as well.
- Don't allow anyone to smoke in your home, in your car, or around you.

Other steps to take

- Make sure you know what to do if exercise is a trigger for you. Many people use quick-relief inhalers before exercise or physical activity.
- Get a flu shot every year and get pneumonia shots as advised by your healthcare provider.
- Try to keep your windows closed during pollen seasons and when mold counts are high.
- On cold or windy days, cover your nose and mouth with a scarf.
- Try to stay away from people who are sick with colds or the flu. Wash your hands often or use a hand sanitizer. If respiratory infections like colds or flu trigger your asthma, use your quick-relief medicines as soon as you begin to notice respiratory symptoms. They may include a runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, or a cough.

Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment as directed. Follow your asthma action plan if you were given one.

Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have:

- Severe wheezing
- Shortness of breath that is not relieved by your quick-relief medicine

- Trouble walking or talking because of shortness of breath
- Blue lips or fingernails
- If you monitor symptoms with a peak flow meter, readings less than 50% of your personal best

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