

# Healthy Living with Asthma

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Anyone can have asthma. There is no cure, but symptoms can be controlled. The goal of asthma treatment is to prevent breathing problems such as wheezing, tightness in the chest, cough and shortness of breath. Your doctor and respiratory therapist can help you enjoy a healthy and active life.

**Here are some suggestions to help manage your asthma symptoms.**

**Get control.** See a doctor or health care provider who understands and uses the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) Guidelines on Diagnosis and Management of Asthma.

**Take medications if prescribed by your doctor.** Based on your symptoms and breathing test results, your health care provider will determine what medications will work best for you. Your respiratory therapist will help you learn about these medications and how to take them properly.

**Avoid “Triggers”.** A trigger is anything that causes you to cough, wheeze, and experience tightness in your chest or shortness of breath.

- *Pollen* - Reduce outside activities when levels are high.
- *Animal dander* - Keep animals outside or at least out of the bedroom.
- *Air pollution and high ozone levels* – Stay inside when levels are high.
- *Molds* - Check under sinks and in basements for wet areas that grow mold.
- *Dust mites* - Clean bed linens, pillows, stuffed animals, carpet and draperies often and wash bedding weekly in hot water (above 130° F).
- *Cockroaches* – Get them out of your home. Do not leave food lying around and take trash out often.
- *Tobacco smoke* - If you smoke, you should ask your doctor for help to quit. Secondhand smoke is harmful, too, and must be avoided.
- *Exercise* is a trigger that is not in the air, but don't stop exercising. Ask your doctor for help so that you can remain active and healthy.

**Have an Action Plan.** Work with your doctor and respiratory therapist to develop a written plan for when to use your inhaler and how to tell if your asthma is worse. The plan will tell you when to call your doctor or go to the hospital.

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**More information on asthma is available online at**

**[www.YourLungHealth.org](http://www.YourLungHealth.org)**