



mercy care

# LIVING WELL WITH ASTHMA

Fall/Winter 2022

## Keep track of your asthma symptoms

If you have asthma, tracking your symptoms can help you take steps to keep breathing well.

What should you track? Start with:

**Daytime symptoms.** Note how often your asthma bothers you during the day — and what symptoms you have. Are you coughing or wheezing? Are you short of breath? Is your chest tight?

**Nighttime symptoms.** Are you ever woken up by asthma? Make a note of how often this happens.

**Your inhaler use.** How often do you need your quick-relief inhaler? If there's been an increase or you need to refill it more than twice a year, let your doctor know.

### How you feel when being active.

Does your asthma act up when you do normal things, like take a walk or climb stairs? That could be a sign it's getting worse.

Your doctor may also ask you to use a peak flow meter and track your results. This device measures how well you're breathing.

Take your notes to each doctor visit — and go over your asthma action plan. It should tell you what to do when your asthma is acting up.

*Source: American Lung Association ([www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org))*

## It's not too late!

A yearly flu shot is the best way to protect yourself from the flu. If you haven't had yours yet, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

*Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov))*

Did you know that you may be able to get Lifeline cell service plus a smartphone at no cost to you? Go to [www.MercyCareAZ.org](http://www.MercyCareAZ.org) or call Member Services at **1-800-624-3879 (TTY: 711)** and ask about the Assurance Wireless Lifeline program.



type is right for you — and show you how to use it.

### **Long-term control medicines**

Most people with asthma also take a daily medicine. These can help prevent flare-ups. They may relax your airways and control swelling over time. They often come as pills or inhalers.

Other long-term medicines aim to change how your body responds to allergy triggers. These might be pills — or shots given in your doctor's office.

### **Know your meds**

To get the most from your medicines, you need to take them just as your doctor directs. Your asthma action plan can tell you when and how to take them to keep you breathing well.

*Sources: American Lung Association ([www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org)); National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute ([www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov))*

## **Understanding your asthma medicines**

If you have asthma, one key to managing it is to understand your medicines. There are two main types. One controls your symptoms over the long term. The other provides quick relief.

### **Quick-relief medicines**

If your symptoms get worse, these fast-acting medicines can help you breathe again. They often come in inhalers. Some relax the muscles around your airways. Others reduce swelling inside your airways. Your doctor can help you know which

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## **4 ways to take charge**

If you have a chronic condition, take it step by step:

1. Learn all you can about it.
2. Work with your doctor on a care plan.
3. Take your medications.
4. Aim for healthy habits.

*Source: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases ([www.niddk.nih.gov](http://www.niddk.nih.gov))*

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### **Contact us**

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Monday through Friday, 7 AM to 6 PM

24-hour nurse line: **602-263-3000** or **1-800-624-3879**

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