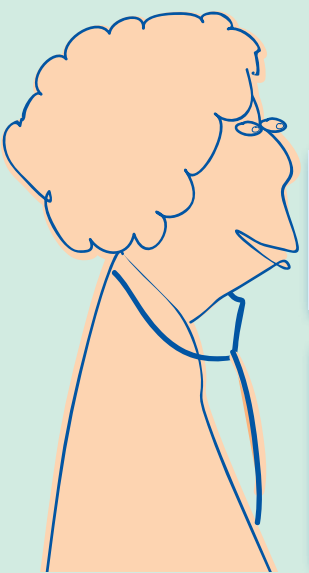


What Doctors & Other Health Professionals Said



Patients need to know their asthma symptoms and how to deal with them.

Patients need a tool to help manage their asthma. Each person's plan will be different and created just for him or her.

Know the difference between quick relief medication and controller medication. Using medication regularly, and not just when you have an episode or attack, is the way to control asthma.

Patients should know how to use their inhalers.

Learn about the triggers that make asthma symptoms worse or lead to an asthma attack.

I wish I had more time to spend with my patients.

Asthma Resources

- New York State Department of Health
(800) 458-1158
www.nyhealth.gov
- Allergy and Asthma Network/Mothers of Asthmatics, Inc.
(800) 878-4403
www.aanma.org
- Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America
(800) 7-ASTHMA
www.aafa.org
- American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
(800) 822-2762
www.aaaai.org/patients/publicedmat/tips/asthmaallergymedications.stm
- American Academy of Pediatrics
(800) 433-9016
www.aap.org
- American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology
(800) 842-7777
www.acaai.org
- American Lung Association
(800) LUNG-USA
www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK900E&b=22581
- Institute For Health Care Communication, Inc.
(800) 800-5907
www.healthcare.com
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
(212) 637-3660
www.epa.gov
- National Jewish Medical and Research Center
(800) 222-LUNG
www.asthma.nationaljewish.org/disease-info/diseases/asthma/living/tools/index.aspx
- National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases
(301) 496-5717
www.niaid.nih.gov



Managing Asthma

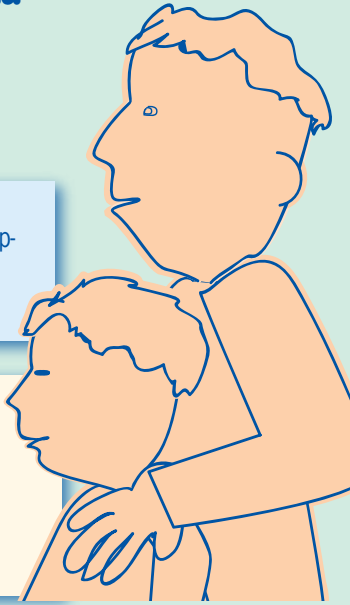


Working Together

We spoke to asthma patients and health professionals (such as physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, pharmacists and health educators) about important messages for managing asthma. This brochure captures some of the ideas they shared, and is intended for patients and health professionals to use together to improve their partnership in managing asthma.



What Asthma Patients & Parents Said



I don't understand the disease of asthma, what symptoms to look for or how to get properly diagnosed.

How do I know when and how to take the different medications? How do I know when to call the doctor or get emergency medical care?

Why take medication if I am feeling fine? Besides, I don't want my child taking steroids. And I worry about side effects.

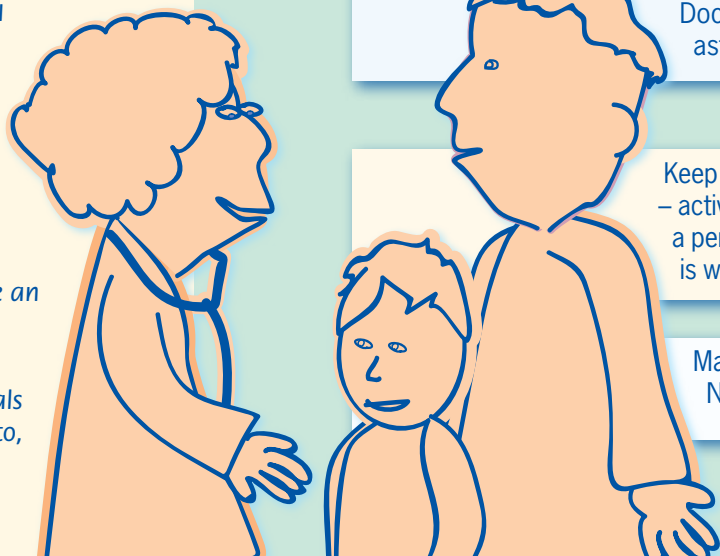
I have no idea how to use the inhaler.

The doctor talked to me about smoke, pets and dust mites. I know those bother some people. It's trial and error to figure out what makes my asthma symptoms worse.

I wish I had more time to spend with my doctor.

Ideas for Questions to Ask at Your Next Appointment

- What is asthma and how does it affect my body?
- What happens during an attack? What are the early warning signs and symptoms?
- What kind of exercise can I do?
- How does the medication work? How do I know which medication to take and when?
- How do I use the inhaler/spacer/holding chamber/nebulizer properly?
- How and when do I use a peak flow meter?
- How do I figure out my personal triggers for asthma?
- What in my home, workplace, school, yard, etc., seems to make my asthma symptoms worse?
- What does it mean to “manage” asthma? If it is a chronic disease that never goes away, how well should I expect to feel?
- What tools can I use to learn how to manage my asthma when it is first diagnosed and later on?
- When is it helpful to see an asthma specialist?
- What resources are recommended— materials to read, people to talk to, local services to use?



Ideas for the Patient and the Health Care Team

Discuss how asthma affects the body. Hands-on models and color pictures can be helpful tools for health professionals and patients.

Create a written asthma action plan. The doctor, patient and caregiver develop the action plan together. It is patient-specific and is updated to ensure a person’s asthma is under control. (See “What is an Asthma Action Plan?” for more details about how this tool can help people better manage their asthma.)

The goal is prevention – to stop asthma attacks before they happen. Discuss concerns about asthma medication – for example, asthma steroids are not the same as the ones misused by some athletes.

Take time to show and understand the proper use of the inhaler and spacer. Doctors, physician assistants, health educators, nurses, CAEs (certified asthma educators), respiratory therapists and pharmacists can all help.

Keep a log to track what seems to make asthma symptoms worse – activities, places, weather, animals, etc. A peak flow meter checks how well a person breathes and can monitor asthma symptoms, how well medication is working and what triggers in the environment are having an effect.

Make the most of your time – see “Ideas for Questions to Ask at Your Next Appointment” to get some ideas!



What is an Asthma Action Plan?

An asthma action plan is a document that health professionals and patients/families develop together. It is a tool that helps monitor and manage asthma flare-ups. The asthma action plan should be updated at least every 6 months. An asthma plan should include:

- Daily controller and quick-relief medications— how often and how much
- When and how medication needs to be adjusted
- What to do when asthma symptoms get worse or wake you up at night
- How to interpret peak flow meter scores or worsening symptoms
- When to call the doctor
- What to do in an emergency

The asthma action plan should be carried by the patient, be part of their medical record and also be provided to family, school or other contacts that need to be familiar with it. Free asthma action plans (English and Spanish) and other resources are available from the New York State Health Department at www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/asthma/brochures.htm.