

Taking Control

Living Well with Severe Asthma



Featuring asthma expert
Dr. Kenneth Chapman



Taking Control

Living Well with Severe Asthma

Introduction

Taking Control: Living Well with Severe Asthma is a video for people living with severe asthma. The program explains the medications used to treat asthma and discusses how allergies may be a factor contributing to asthma symptoms. You'll also learn to recognize when your asthma is not being well controlled, how to use an asthma action plan, and how to be as symptom-free as possible despite having severe asthma.



Featuring
Dr. Kenneth Chapman
Director, Asthma & Airway Centre
University Health Network
Toronto, Ontario



Understanding Asthma

Doctors define asthma as a chronic inflammatory disease characterized by two components:

- **Bronchoconstriction:** where the muscles surrounding the airways tighten, which causes you to experience asthma symptoms, namely cough, wheeze, chest tightness and shortness of breath.
- **Inflammation:** the major component of asthma, which causes the airways to become red and swollen.

“I would miss work or school if I had these attacks. And being hospitalized many times — up to six times a year.”



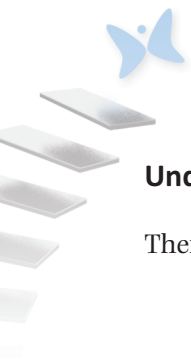
“[Asthma] affects everyone around you. You may not realize how much.”

Asthma and Allergy

Allergies play an important role in many people with asthma. In someone with allergic asthma, exposure to an allergen results in the release of a type of antibody called immunoglobulin E (or IgE). When IgE binds to specialized cells in the airways, this causes the release of inflammatory substances, such as histamine and leukotrienes. These substances then result in an allergic reaction characterized by inflammation and a narrowing of the airways.



“For the majority of patients with asthma, allergy plays a pivotal role. The more closely we look for an allergic mechanism, the more likely we are to find it.”



Understanding Your Asthma Medications

There are two categories of asthma medications (Table 1):

- **Relievers** — used to relax the muscles in the airways and provide rapid relief of asthma symptoms.
- **Controllers** — to control the underlying inflammation of the airways. The most common controllers are the inhaled corticosteroids. These medications must be taken regularly — whether or not you have asthma symptoms. They are needed to control the inflammation in your airways and prevent you from experiencing symptoms.

In some instances your physician may prescribe additional medications such as:

- Long-acting bronchodilators
- Combination therapy
- Anti-leukotrienes
- IgE blockers
- Oral corticosteroids.

Table 1. Medications commonly used to treat asthma.

Type	Brand name	Chemical name
Relievers		
Short-acting bronchodilator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Airomir • Apo-Salvent • Bricanyl • Ventolin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salbutamol • Salbutamol • Terbutaline • Salbutamol
Controllers		
Inhaled corticosteroids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alvesco • Flovent • Pulmicort • Qvar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ciclesonide • Fluticasone • Budesonide • Beclomethasone
Long-acting bronchodilators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foradil • Oxeze • Serevent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formoterol • Formoterol • Salmeterol
Combination therapies (corticosteroid + bronchodilator)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advair • Symbicort 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fluticasone + salmeterol • Budesonide + formoterol
Leukotriene receptor antagonists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accolate • Singulair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zafirlukast • Montelukast
Oral corticosteroids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deltasone • Prediapred 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prednisone • Prednisolone
IgE blockers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xolair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omalizumab



How Do I Know My Asthma is Not Controlled?

Six questions to assess if your asthma is being well controlled:¹

	Goal
1. How frequent are your day-time symptoms?	No more than 4 times per week
2. How often are there night-time symptoms?	Less than 1 time per week
3. How often do you use your reliever?	Less than 4 times per week [†]
4. Do you have normal physical activity?	Normal level of activity
5. Have you required treatment at a walk-in clinic or Emergency department?	No additional treatments at a clinic/hospital
6. Have you missed work or school?	No absences

[†] May use 1 dose per day to prevent exercise-induced symptoms.

To find out how well controlled your asthma is, take the Asthma Society's interactive quiz *How Do You Feel Today?* at www.asthma.ca

I thought it was well controlled. I thought if I wasn't being hospitalized all the time that things were working for me.



1. Adapted from Canadian Asthma Consensus guidelines. Becker and colleagues. *Can Med Assoc J* 2005; 173(6 suppl): S1-S56.

Your Asthma Action Plan

An asthma action plan helps you to monitor how well your asthma is under control and to determine when to take action.

Asthma Action Plan Form 1000

Printed name: _____ Hospital address: _____
Phone: _____ Date: _____
The color tells you what to do when your asthma is not well controlled.

Green Zone	Yellow Zone	Red Zone
1. Take your asthma medicine as prescribed. 2. Use your inhaler correctly. 3. Use your spacer. 4. Use your spacer. 5. Use your spacer. 6. Use your spacer. 7. Use your spacer. 8. Use your spacer. 9. Use your spacer. 10. Use your spacer.	1. Take your asthma medicine as prescribed. 2. Use your inhaler correctly. 3. Use your spacer. 4. Use your spacer. 5. Use your spacer. 6. Use your spacer. 7. Use your spacer. 8. Use your spacer. 9. Use your spacer. 10. Use your spacer.	1. Take your asthma medicine as prescribed. 2. Use your inhaler correctly. 3. Use your spacer. 4. Use your spacer. 5. Use your spacer. 6. Use your spacer. 7. Use your spacer. 8. Use your spacer. 9. Use your spacer. 10. Use your spacer.

Green Zone: This means your asthma is well controlled and your symptoms are minimal. Keep taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor.

Yellow Zone: Studies have shown that 60% of Canadians living with asthma are not well controlled and they continue to have asthma symptoms. These people live day-to-day in the yellow zone. This is a warning zone and some adjustments to your medication are needed to regain control of your asthma.

Red Zone: This means an emergency situation. It is important to go to the hospital Emergency Room or call 911 as you require immediate medical attention.

Green zone: This means your asthma is well controlled and your symptoms are minimal. Keep taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor.

Yellow zone: Studies have shown that 60% of Canadians living with asthma are not well controlled and they continue to have asthma symptoms. These people live day-to-day in the

yellow zone. This is a warning zone and some adjustments to your medication are needed to regain control of your asthma.

Red zone: This means an emergency situation. It is important to go to the hospital Emergency Room or call 911 as you require immediate medical attention.



Asthma action plans can be downloaded at www.asthma.ca or www.asthmameds.ca.

You need to do something right away as soon as symptoms start.



The medications you take will depend on the severity of your asthma and how well it is being controlled. If you continue to have symptoms, or you have asthma flare-ups with your regular treatments, then talk to your doctor about taking more medication(s) or different type(s) of medications to control your asthma.

The key is to adjust the medications until your asthma is under control and you are not experiencing flare-ups or symptoms. This may require a little time and patience. It's important to work closely with your primary healthcare provider, your specialist and/or your Certified Asthma Educator. Together you can find the right combination of medications that works for you.

You can achieve the goal — of being as symptom-free as possible — despite living with severe asthma.



“We believe that patients with asthma should be living normal lives — and that includes people with moderate and even severe asthma.”

For more information on asthma or to speak
to a Certified Asthma Educator,
contact The Asthma Society of Canada at:



Telephone: **1-866-787-4050**
Email: **info@asthma.ca**

Website: www.asthma.ca
www.asthmameds.ca

To connect with other Canadians living with asthma, join the
National Asthma Patient Alliance (NAPA) at www.asthma.ca/napa

Produced by



On behalf of
The Asthma Society of Canada

© Communications Lansdowne 2009. All rights reserved. None of the contents may be reproduced in any form without prior written permission of the publisher.

All brand names in this video are protected by trademark. Consult your doctor or the product's package insert for information on dosing and side effects. Do not start, stop or change the dose of your medication without consulting your doctor first.

Printed in Canada

This program has been supported by an unrestricted educational grant from Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc.



The Asthma Society of Canada
Telephone (toll-free in Canada) 1-866-787-4050;
in Toronto (416) 787-4050
Email: info@asthma.ca
Website: www.asthma.ca