

## Asthma Control

*Asthma is a chronic condition, which means that you need to monitor and manage your asthma throughout your lifetime.*

While there is currently no cure for asthma, with proper treatment and management you can effectively control your asthma and live **symptom-free**.

Asthma treatment is successful if you learn all that you can about your asthma including symptoms, triggers, medications and ongoing asthma management to achieve control. Only you know how you feel and how your asthma is affecting you. It is your responsibility to act when your asthma is not in good control.

People tend to see frequent asthma symptoms as a normal part of living with asthma, not realizing that they could live symptom-free.

## You **CAN** live symptom-free.

Included are tools to help you manage your asthma.

- Asthma Red & Yellow Flags Checklist
- Asthma Action Plan



*Asthma Canada has many free resources that can help you manage your asthma.*

**Visit**

**[asthma.ca](http://asthma.ca)**



## Signs of Good Asthma Control

- You don't have breathing difficulties, cough or wheeze most days
- You sleep through the night without awakening due to asthma symptoms
- You can exercise without asthma symptoms
- You don't miss work or school due to asthma
- You have normal lung function (spirometry) tests
- You do not need to use your reliever (rescue) inhaler more than **2** times per week (except for exercise)

## Asthma Red & Yellow Flags Checklist

The Asthma Red Flags Checklist will help you recognize the signs of uncontrolled or Severe Asthma, so that you know when to ask for help when you need it.

## Asthma Red and Yellow Flags

**Red flags are symptoms or signs that your asthma is not controlled.** If you have one or more red flags, you definitely need help to make sure you are managing your asthma properly. Speak to your health care provider about whether you would benefit from seeing a specialist.

**Yellow flags are also indicators of uncontrolled asthma,** but taken individually, they are usually not as serious as a red flag. They still warrant a conversation with your health care provider. If you have three or more yellow flags, speak to your health care provider about seeing a specialist.

## Severe Asthma

Some people with asthma have Severe Asthma, and they may require more than just controller and reliever medications to manage their asthma.

There are additional medications available called *biologics* which can be added to your current medication to control Severe Asthma. Speak to your health care provider about seeing a specialist to discuss this further.

## Talk to Your Health Care Provider

Visit your health care provider at least once a year if your symptoms are well controlled, and more frequently if you are experiencing symptoms. Together, you can develop a plan for managing your asthma.

## Asthma Red and Yellow Flags Checklist

NAME:

DATE:

### Asthma Red Flags

If you have **ONE** or more of the red flags listed below, speak to your healthcare provider about your symptoms.

- ☐ Frequent visits to the emergency room, or a stay in the hospital
- ☐ Using **2** or more puffs of your rescue inhaler per week (excluding use prior to exercise as prescribed)
- ☐ More than 2 courses of steroids in a year
- ☐ Feeling like asthma is controlling your life, and nothing seems to work
- ☐ Frequent flare-ups, asthma attacks, and severe symptoms
- ☐ Feeling like your condition is life-threatening
- ☐ Regular absences from work, school, or other activities because of asthma symptoms
- ☐ Feeling like you want to withdraw

### Asthma Yellow Flags

If you have **THREE** or more of the yellow flags listed below, speak to your healthcare provider about your symptoms.

- ☐ Feeling frightened, frustrated or angry because of asthma
- ☐ A need to make too many lifestyle compromises
- ☐ Negative impacts on your family or relationships because of your asthma
- ☐ Unable to be as active as you want, or keep up with peers
- ☐ Prioritizing reliever medications over controller medications
- ☐ Fear of medications or side-effects, or not taking medications properly
- ☐ Symptoms indicative of a more serious disease, including: chest pain, nighttime symptoms, increased breathlessness, inability to walk up stairs, feeling like there is an elephant on your chest, coughing that prevents you from continuing your activities, constant wheezing or fatigue
- ☐ Diagnosed with other conditions that make asthma difficult to control or symptoms worse, including: nasal polyps, chronic sinusitis or rhinitis, anaphylactic food allergy, obesity, obstructive sleep apnea or sleep disordered breathing, gastroesophageal reflux, upper airway dysfunction, other respiratory conditions, stress, anxiety, or depression
- ☐ Too many negative side-effects from medications like weight gain, irritability, mood changes, facial swelling, insomnia



## What is an Asthma Action Plan?

Your Asthma Action Plan is your personalized guide for managing asthma when it gets out of control. Work with your healthcare provider to fill out your plan and take it with you when you visit your doctor for regular review.

Your Action Plan should help you recognize the early warning signs of an asthma exacerbation so you can take the appropriate steps to prevent a full-blown attack. It helps you take control of your asthma, know when to increase or decrease your medications and decide when to seek emergency help.

This Action Plan is a guide only. Always see your doctor if you are unsure of what to do.

## Asthma Control

**Your asthma is not well controlled if you answer 'yes' to any of the following:**

1. Do you use **2** or more puffs of your rescue inhaler per week?
2. Do you wake up at night because of asthma symptoms?
3. Do you stop exercising because of asthma?
4. Do you miss school or work because of asthma?

### Pro Tip:

Ask your healthcare provider to check your inhaler technique!

Name:

Email:

Date:

Physician Name & Phone:

Closest Hospital:

Emergency Contact Name & Phone:

### Pro Tip:

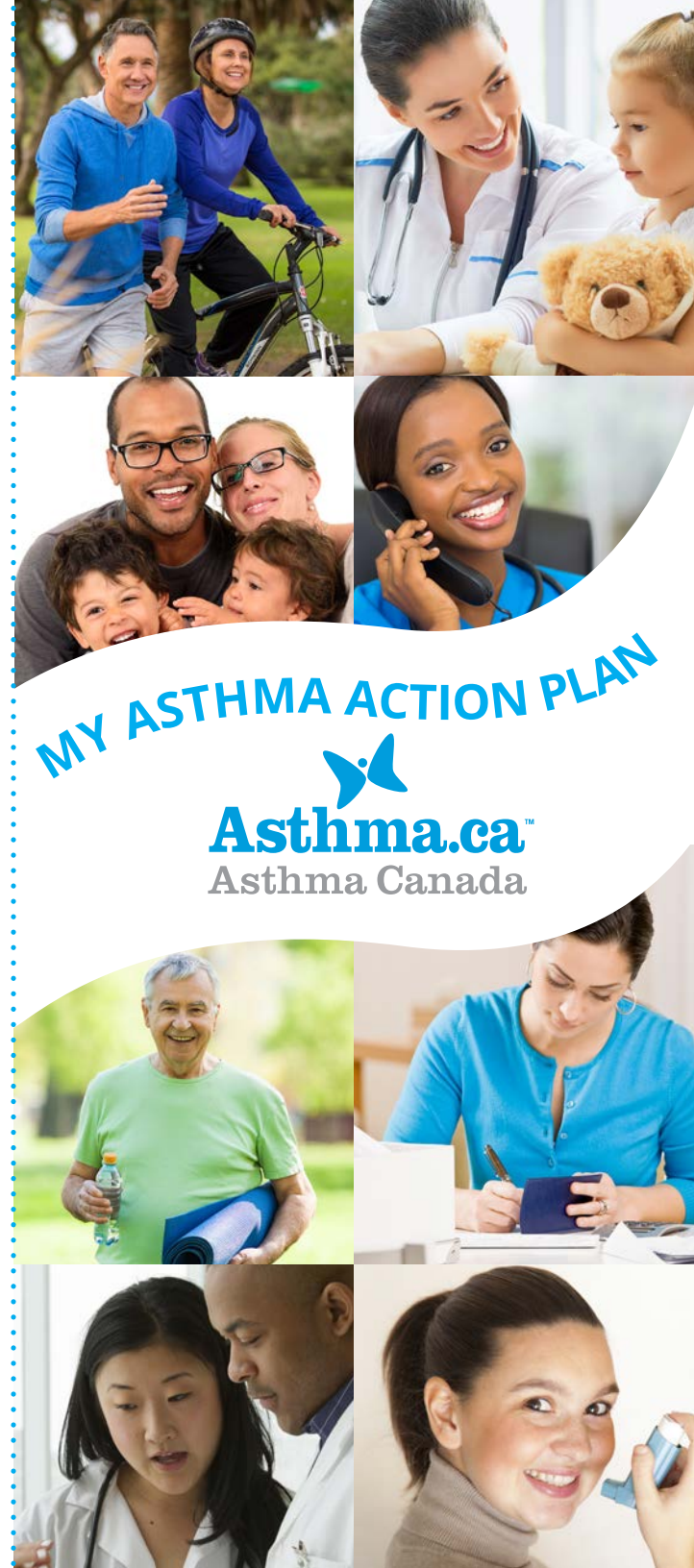
Using a spacer or valved-holding chamber with your asthma inhaler will make it easier to get the right amount of medicine you need & reduce some side-effects!



Call Asthma Canada's **FREE Asthma & Allergy HelpLine** to speak to a Certified Respiratory Educator

**1-866-787-4050**

or email us at [info@asthma.ca](mailto:info@asthma.ca)



**MY ASTHMA ACTION PLAN**

**Asthma.ca**<sup>™</sup>  
Asthma Canada

## Asthma is well controlled

- No night-time asthma symptoms
- Daytime symptoms less than **2** times/week
- Can exercise with no symptoms
- Need reliever less than **2** times/week

Peak flow:

Other:

Medication

Dose

Times per day


### Additional Notes & Instructions

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## Asthma is getting worse

- Disrupted sleep due to asthma symptoms
- Daytime symptoms **2** or more times/week
- Cannot exercise normally
- Need reliever more than **2** times/week
- Getting a cold or flu

Peak flow:

Other:

Medication

Dose

Times per day


### Additional Notes & Instructions

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## Time to get help

- Difficulty speaking due to asthma
- Experiencing shortness of breath at rest
- Lips or nails turning blue
- Reliever does not work

Peak flow:

Other:

Medication

Dose

Times per day


### Additional Notes & Instructions

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## EMERGENCY

Severe breathing problems  
Symptoms getting worse quickly  
Reliever has little or no affect

# DIAL 911