



Act fast to control an asthma attack

Wheezing. Coughing. Trouble breathing. Tightening in your chest.

If you have asthma, any of these symptoms may be an early warning sign that your condition is worsening. This may mean you are headed for an asthma attack.

An asthma attack can begin when the airways (breathing tubes) in your lungs begin to narrow or tighten.

Do not wait too long for help. Without quick thinking and treatment, an asthma attack can be deadly.

Here is what to do:

- **Keep calm.**
- Take the medication your health care provider has prescribed for an asthma attack. Some patients, with approval from a health care provider, may need to increase the dosage of their

asthma medicine. Others may need to take a second, quick-acting medication, with their health care provider's approval, to relieve their symptoms.

- Use your peak flow meter to measure the airflow in your lungs.
- Seek emergency help if your asthma does not improve after taking medicine or your symptoms get worse.

It is also important to remove any allergens or triggers that may be contributing to the asthma attack.

Talk with your health care provider ahead of time about what to do when you think you are having an asthma attack. Together, you can make a written emergency asthma action plan. This will include instructions to follow during an attack.

Did you know?

Clothing collects dust. Keep clothes in the closet, drawers or hamper.

Do you have an asthma action plan?

One tool that helps patients monitor asthma symptoms is called the asthma action plan. This is a set of written instructions to help you recognize worsening asthma symptoms. It also helps you learn how to treat them. Asthma action plans are customized for each patient.

An asthma action plan is divided into three sections—the green zone, yellow zone, and red zone. It lists the symptoms and actions you should take in each zone.

- In the green zone, you are symptom-free and you are doing well.
- In the yellow zone, your symptoms are getting worse. You may need treatment, such as quick-relief medicine.
- In the red zone, the symptoms are at their worst. You may need to seek immediate medical attention.

The plan also highlights ways to control asthma triggers. If you have asthma, talk with your health care provider about a written asthma action plan that will work for you.