

Spring 2023

Asthma

Improve your lung health with
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Alabama

**ASTHMA AND YOU: PREVENTION
IS ALWAYS THE BEST MEDICINE.**

To help control your asthma symptoms, it's important to stay educated and take proactive steps. Learn how to control your asthma and avoid environmental factors that can make it worse.

Get your flu shot every year and schedule other necessary immunizations as part of your annual routine wellness visit. The purpose of this newsletter is to help you control your asthma. We hope you find this information helpful. Thank you for reading.

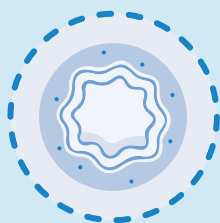


**BlueCross BlueShield
of Alabama**

Understanding Asthma

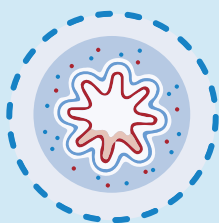
Asthma is a chronic condition with various triggers and symptoms that can vary from person to person. Better management of asthma begins with a better understanding of the disease.

For some people, asthma is a minor problem. For others, it can be a significant problem that interferes with daily activities and quality of life. Because asthma often changes over time, it is essential to work with your healthcare provider to track your symptoms and adjust your treatment as needed.



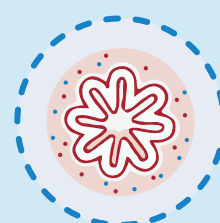
NORMAL AIRWAY

Airways are not inflamed, and air can pass through freely.



ASTHMATIC AIRWAY

Airways are swollen, narrowing the path of airflow, making breathing more difficult.



ASTHMA ATTACK

The muscles in the lungs constrict the airways, causing breathing to become extremely difficult.

Seek help immediately.

Asthma Symptoms

- Shortness of breath
- Chest tightness or pain
- Wheezing when exhaling
- Coughing

Asthma Triggers:

- Smoking
- Food sensitivities or allergies
- Stress
- Exercise
- Air quality
- Illnesses like a cold or the flu
- Weather changes

When to See Your Healthcare Provider:

- If you think you have asthma
- To monitor your asthma after you've been diagnosed
- If your symptoms have gotten worse
- To discuss your treatment and make any necessary changes

Understanding your asthma symptoms and triggers will make it easier for you to manage your condition.

6 Common Asthma Myths

Understanding your condition can be challenging and there are many myths surrounding asthma. Get the facts on how asthma is impacting you.

MYTH	FACT
✗ People living with Asthma should limit or avoid physical activity.	✓ Exercise has numerous benefits, and people with asthma should exercise after consulting their doctor.
✗ Asthma is treatable only when symptoms are present.	✓ Asthma is a chronic condition that requires ongoing treatment.
✗ Children often outgrow their asthma.	✓ Asthma is a life-long disease. A child's asthma can seem to go away or become less severe over time.
✗ Asthma medications are addictive, unsafe and lose effectiveness over time.	✓ Asthma medications are safe and essential for asthma management.
✗ Asthma can be cured.	✓ While there is no cure for asthma, it can be effectively managed with ongoing treatment.
✗ Asthma attacks are always sudden and severe.	✓ Most asthma attacks develop slowly, and symptoms gradually increase, like chest tightening, shortness of breath, coughing and wheezing.



Ways to Avoid Asthma Flare-Ups

An asthma trigger is an activity or condition that worsens asthma. When you encounter a trigger, it can cause a sudden worsening of symptoms, often called an asthma attack, episode or flare-up.



Common asthma triggers include respiratory infections, allergens, irritants, exercise and emotions. Knowing what causes your asthma is essential to managing your asthma. Your healthcare provider can help you identify what triggers your asthma and find simple solutions to reduce and avoid asthma triggers.

There are ways you can avoid experiencing flare-ups this spring:

- Always have your inhaler and spacer with you.
- Understand your spring allergy triggers.
- Avoid things that may cause flare-ups, such as smoke, strong odors, pet dander, mold or pollen.
- Take your long-term control medicine as directed. Please do not skip it or take less because you are feeling better.
- Work with your healthcare provider to create an asthma action plan.
- Once you understand what triggers your symptoms, take action to avoid or limit your exposure to those triggers.

If you experience an asthma flare-up, the following steps are essential to managing flare-ups:

- Take quick-relief medications through your inhaler
- Take controller medications to reduce lung inflammation
- See your healthcare provider if your symptoms persist

If your asthma symptoms worsen, it's essential to treat them as directed. Talk to your healthcare provider if your symptoms persist or if they continue to worsen.



Staying Fit with Asthma

Exercise is essential for your overall health as well as your lung health. Daily exercise improves your lung capacity, increases blood flow to your lungs, supports your immune system and helps you stay at a healthy weight. People with asthma can participate in all types of exercise, but it is essential to recognize when you are experiencing symptoms and stop the activity right away.

Types of Exercises to Try:

- Walking
- Biking
- Hiking
- Swimming



Some people experience exercise-induced asthma symptoms during exercise or after physically demanding activities. If you experience exercise-induced asthma, you should talk to your healthcare provider to see if a different treatment option is best for you.

Tips for Healthy Lungs:

- Start any exercise with a warm-up period
- Cover your nose and mouth when exercising outdoors in cold temperatures
- Remember to include a cool-down period
- Limit exercising or outdoor activities when the air quality is unhealthy

Not everyone has the same symptoms, so be aware of yours and find an exercise routine that works for you.



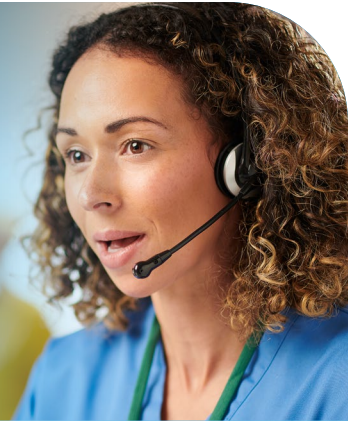
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Talk to a Nurse

Eligible members have access to our **FREE** nurse phone lines.
Call **1-888-841-5741** for more information.

AlabamaBlue.com/TalkToANurse



COVID-19 Update

The current vaccines provide a high level of protection against severe disease.

Getting vaccinated will help keep you and your family healthy and safe.

STAY SAFE.

This information is provided for general informational purposes. Information contained in this communication is not intended to replace professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified healthcare provider regarding your healthcare needs. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay seeking medical advice because of something you have read in this informational piece. Always check your benefits for coverage information and limitations.

For more information about the COVID-19 vaccine and its availability in your area, contact your physician's office or local pharmacy. Additional COVID-19 topics and how the pandemic could affect you and your family can be found at www.cdc.gov/COVID19



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