

KEEPING ASTHMA UNDER CONTROL

According to the CDC, 25 million Americans have asthma today, including 10 percent of all children. Although it's common, it should not be taken lightly. Asthma can severely affect quality of life, and can be deadly.

Asthma attacks occur when a person with asthma comes into contact with an asthma "trigger." A trigger causes inflammation and narrowing of your lungs' airways. This can lead to coughing, wheezing and can limit or even prevent breathing. Asthma attacks require rescue medicines and can be a medical emergency.

If you or your child has asthma, the most important thing you can do is keep it under control to avoid attacks. The keys to good asthma control are to:



Have regular asthma checkups with your doctor.

Working with your doctor to develop an asthma action plan plays a key role in good asthma control. Keep a diary of your asthma triggers and symptoms such as wheezing, coughing and shortness of breath. Discuss these with your doctor to find better ways to control your asthma. The goal is to minimize asthma attacks and take medicines, as needed.

Use your asthma control medicines as prescribed.

Control medicines are taken regularly, usually every day. These medicines help you avoid an asthma attack by minimizing inflammation. They do not help during an asthma attack.

Know your asthma triggers and avoid them.

Each person's asthma triggers are different. They may include irritants, like cigarette smoke or chemical fumes, or they may be allergens such as dust, mold or pollen. You and your doctor should discuss your asthma triggers and how they can be avoided.