



**Taking charge of
your asthma**

You can take charge of your asthma

Asthma is an illness that causes swelling in the airways of the lungs, making it hard for you to breathe.

Asthma is a condition you always have, even when you don't feel sick. Symptoms get much worse during an attack, so it is important to know your triggers.

Doctors don't know why some people have asthma and others don't. Medicine won't make it go away for good, but there are things you can do to help you deal with asthma.

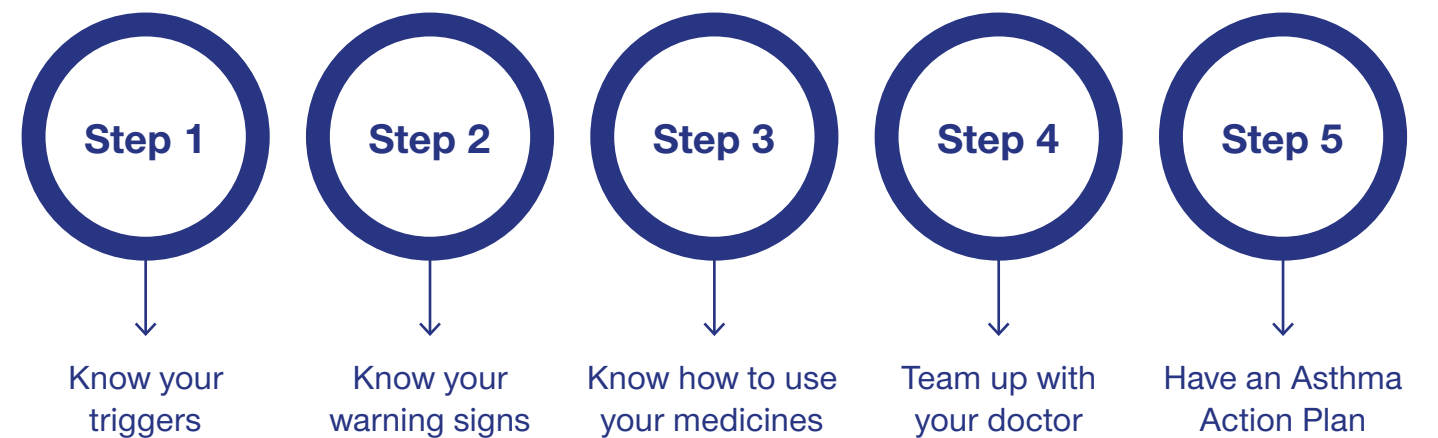


Know the signs of asthma

- Coughing, often at night or during exercise
- Wheezing or whistling sound when you breathe
- Shortness of breath or fast breathing
- Frequent colds that settle in the chest

You could have all of these problems, or just one. They may come and go. It is important to keep track so you can learn what triggers your asthma.

5 simple steps to help you take charge



1

Know your triggers

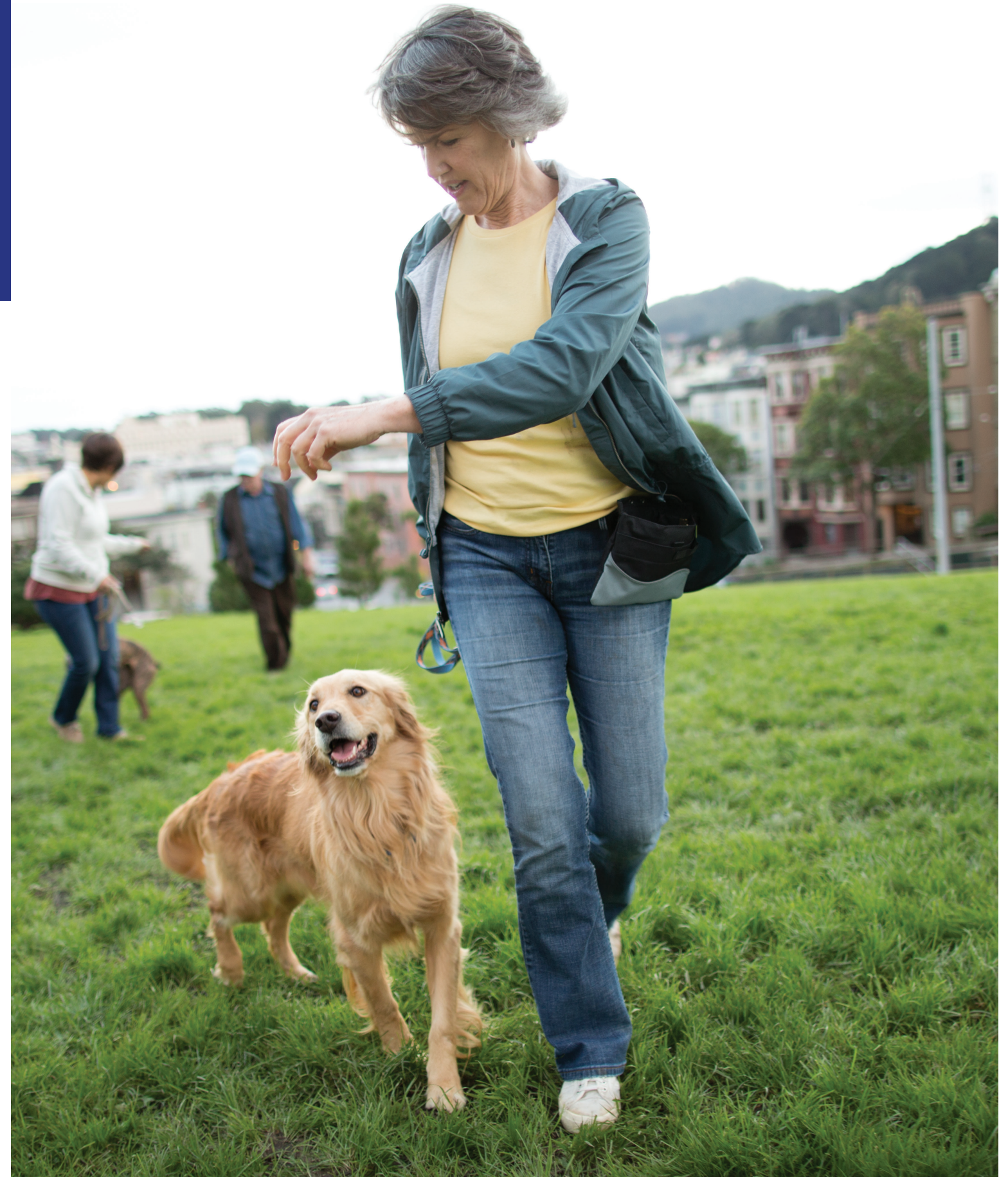
An asthma trigger* is something that makes your symptoms worse. Triggers vary from person to person, so it is important to learn what those triggers are, so you can avoid them as much as possible. If you can't avoid them, have your medicine ready.

- Animals with fur
- Secondhand smoke
- Weather changes
- Not exercising properly
- Being sick or allergies
- Pollen, pollution, strong odors or dust mites

Stop smoking with some help

You can get help to quit smoking. Call **1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669)** or visit smokingstopshere.com and smokefree.gov to find out more.

*Not all asthma triggers are listed above



2

Know your warning signs

An asthma attack can happen fast. This can be scary. That's why it's important to look for warning signs.

Keep track of when you are having trouble. This will help you identify triggers and prevent asthma attacks.

- Time of day, like night or early morning
- Time of year, like spring or fall
- While you're active, like running or doing housework
- When you're feeling stressed or emotional
- When you are around asthma triggers and the places where the triggers are found

Make note of patterns and symptoms. Be sure to discuss them with your doctor. This will help the doctor suggest medicines and other treatments that will work best for you.



3

Know how to use your medicines



It can be really hard to avoid your asthma triggers. Make sure you know how to use your medicine to stay safe. This will help you avoid trips to the emergency room.

There are 2 kinds of medicine for asthma symptoms:

1 Quick, temporary relief

This inhaler is used at the first sign of an asthma attack. This type of inhaler is known as a rescue inhaler, and is used as needed. It should stop problems like coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath. It should only be used when needed and does not replace the controller. You should have this medicine with you at all times.

2 Long-term control

This inhaler should be used every day, and is known as a controller. It controls asthma symptoms by helping airways stay open. If you use this kind of medicine, you may not have as many asthma attacks over time. Or, the attacks may be milder.

Tips for using your medicine

You may use an inhaler with both kinds of medicine. You might also use a machine called a nebulizer.

Inhaler

- An inhaler gets medicine right into your lungs
- Bring your inhaler with you when you visit the doctor. The doctor or the doctor's nurse can make sure you are using it correctly. A pharmacist can also help.

Nebulizer

- This is also called a breathing machine. It creates a mist of medicine.
- A mask is used to breathe in the mist for 5–10 minutes

Peak flow meter

- Your peak flow meter will show you how much air you can breathe into your lungs
- Ask your doctor how often your peak flow should be checked. Be sure to write it down on your Asthma Action Plan.



Be sure to use your medicines exactly as the doctor tells you.

4

Team up with your doctor

People with asthma need extra care. In fact, you might see more than one doctor.



A primary doctor

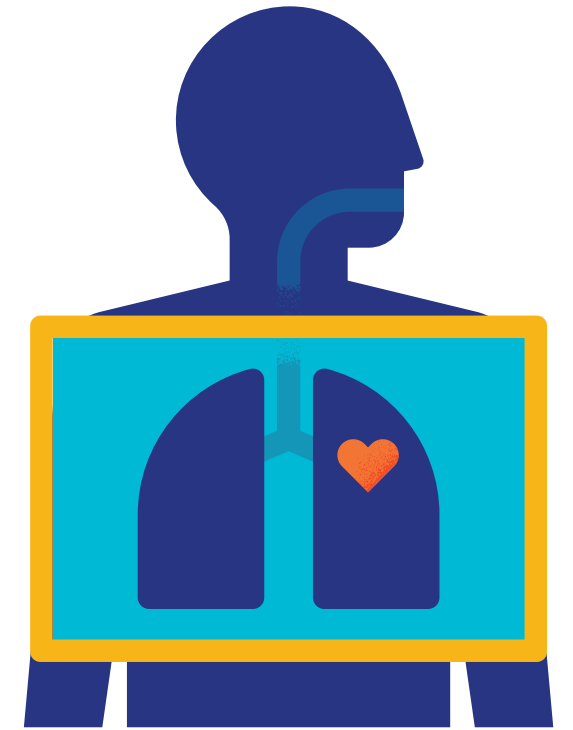
You should have a primary doctor who can treat your condition. If you don't have a primary doctor, we can help you find one. Call Member Services at the number located on the back of your ID card.

You can also find a primary doctor by visiting myuhc.com/communityplan and using the Find-a-Doctor tool.



A specialist

You may also see an allergy doctor (or allergist) or a lung doctor (or pulmonologist). This could happen if you have lots of symptoms or frequent attacks.



Ask your doctor

Use the questions below to discuss your Asthma Action Plan.

What medicines should I take for asthma problems?

Quick relief: _____

Long-term/daily: _____

Am I using the inhaler the right way?

What do I do if I'm having problems?

How and when should I use a peak flow meter?

How can I find the best peak flow reading?

Is the yearly flu vaccine right for me? _____

What is my Asthma Action Plan? _____

What are my triggers? _____

How do I avoid them? _____

Can I go outside? _____

Other questions you may have: _____

5

Have an Asthma Action Plan

An Asthma Action Plan is a written record of your treatment plan. You and your doctor should complete it together. Review it at each visit to make sure it's up-to-date.

Keep your Asthma Action Plan in a handy place at home. Share it with your family members and anyone close to you.



The signs of asthma can be put into 3 zones: go, caution and danger. Know what your Action Plan is for each zone.



Your Asthma Action Plan

Bring this with you to your doctor. You can use it to help guide you on when to take your medicine and seek help based on your plan for each zone.

Patient name: _____

GO – You are doing well.	Peak flow	Use these daily controller medicines		
You have all of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathing is good No cough or wheezing Sleep through the night Can go to work or spend time doing what you like 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
	<input type="text"/>			

CAUTION – Slow down.	Peak flow	Continue with green zone medicine and add:		
You have any of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First signs of a cold Cough or mild wheeze Tight chest Trouble breathing, especially at night 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
	<input type="text"/>			

DANGER – Get help.	Peak flow	Take these medicines and call your doctor now.		
Your asthma is getting worse fast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicine is not helping Breathing is hard and fast Nose opens wide Ribs show Severe wheezing 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
	<input type="text"/>			

Helpful resources

For more information, visit these websites

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
aafa.org

American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
acaai.org

American Lung Association
lung.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/asthma; cdc.gov/copd

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
myuhc.com/communityplan
uhccommunityplan.com



If there's an emergency, call 911.



Important contacts

Doctor's name: _____ Phone: _____

Pharmacy: _____ Phone: _____

Urgent care: _____ Phone: _____

Hospital: _____ Phone: _____

Notes

We care about your health

We're here to help you get the care you need,
that works best for you, when you need it.

uhcommunityplan.com

