

# Take Charge of **ASTHMA!**

## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease that narrows your airways and makes breathing difficult. Asthma can't be cured. It can be controlled and you can live a full and active life.

## What Causes Asthma Symptoms?

Asthma makes your airways very sensitive. When your airways come into contact with certain things, called **triggers**, the airways narrow because they swell and make mucus. The muscles around the airways also tighten and squeeze the airways together. This will cause asthma symptoms like:

- Shortness of Breath
- Wheezing
- Coughing
- Tightness in the Chest

These asthma symptoms come and go and can be mild or severe. When you have symptoms, you are having an asthma episode, or attack.

## What Makes Asthma Worse?

These are some of the **triggers** that may cause you to have an asthma episode.

- Cigarette Smoke
- Pollen
- Cold Weather
- Colds, Flu
- Cats
- Diesel Exhaust
- Cockroaches
- Mold
- Dust Mites
- Strong smells/odors
- Exercise
- Laughing or Crying

## Asthma Medicines

Your doctor may give you several different kinds of medicine. It's very important to know what each medicine does.

There are two main kinds of medicine:

**long-term control**, for long term use to avoid having symptoms, and **quick relief** for when you do have symptoms. Both types of medicine may come in an inhaler so it's easy to get confused.

**A written Asthma Action Plan helps the family, doctor, and school know what medicines to give when symptoms begin.**

**Call 311 to get one to bring to your doctor.**

Asthma Action Plan			Green means Go Zone!
			Yellow means Caution Zone!
			Red means Danger Zone!
<b>GO</b>	Use these daily medicines:		
	MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN
<b>CAUTION</b>	Continue with green zone and add:		
	MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN
<b>DANGER</b>	Take these medicines and call your doctor:		
	MEDICINE	HOW MUCH	HOW OFTEN

 The City of New York Department of Health

# Take Charge of **ASTHMA!**

## Get Asthma Under Control

- See a health care provider
- Get an Asthma Action Plan – a written asthma plan
- Learn how and when to use the right medicine
- Take medicine to prevent asthma symptoms
- Learn what sets off an asthma episode
- Use a peak flow meter to see if your asthma is getting worse
- Get a flu shot

## Ask Your Health Care Provider

- What is asthma and how do I deal with it?
- Which are long-term control medicines and which are quick relief medicines?
- What is my Asthma Action plan?
- What might trigger my asthma?
- How do I use an inhaler and spacer?
- How do I use a peak flow meter?
- When is my next appointment?

**When your asthma is under control, you can live an active, healthy life.**

**Children with asthma can do anything – go to school every day, take trips and play sports.**

**You can run, swim, ride a bike and HAVE FUN!**



**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION  
ABOUT ASTHMA  
CALL 311**

New York City Asthma Initiative  
New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene  
2 Lafayette Street, CN#36A, New York, NY 10007  
[nyc.gov/health/asthma](http://nyc.gov/health/asthma)



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