

# LEARN MORE BREATHE BETTER<sup>SM</sup>



## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Work closely with your health care provider to learn how to **manage your asthma** and keep it under control. Regular asthma check-ups will help. It's also important to see your provider if you have a cough that won't go away; are often short of breath; or you wheeze, especially at night or after being active. Remember, asthma can be serious.

### BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

**First**, write down:

- Symptoms you've had
- Time of day or night they've occurred
- Where you were at the time
- What you were doing

**Second**, create a list for the provider of ALL the medicines and supplements that you take—or bring them all with you in a bag. Medicines you take for other conditions might affect your asthma or your asthma medicine.

For more information and resources on lung health, visit NHLBI's Learn More Breathe Better program at [nhlbi.nih.gov/BreatheBetter](http://nhlbi.nih.gov/BreatheBetter).

## ASTHMA

### DURING THE APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR PROVIDER

**Speak Up.** Tell your health care provider about what you want to achieve by controlling your asthma better. Ask for their help in reaching those goals.

**Be Open.** When your provider asks you questions, answer honestly and completely. Briefly describe your symptoms. Include when you started having each symptom, how often you have it, and whether it's been getting worse.

**Keep It Simple.** If you don't understand something your provider says, ask for a simple explanation. Be clear on how to take your medicines. If you're worried about understanding what the provider says, or if you have trouble hearing, bring a friend or relative with you to your appointment. You may want to ask that person to write down instructions for you.



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**Third**, think about the questions the health care provider may ask you. For example, do you have any of the following?

- ✓ Periods of coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, or chest tightness that come on suddenly, occur often, or seem to happen during certain times of year
- ✓ Colds that seem to “go to the chest” or take more than 10 days to get over
- ✓ Medicines you used to help your breathing
- ✓ Other family members who’ve had asthma or allergies
- ✓ Irritants that trigger or worsen your symptoms
- ✓ Symptoms that make living a normal, active life harder

Finally, **write down your questions** for your provider.



## SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

1. Are you sure it's asthma?
2. Do I need other tests to confirm the diagnosis?
3. If I think my medicine isn't working, is it okay to take more right away?
4. What should I do if I miss a dose?
5. Will my medicine cause me any problems, like shakiness, sore throat, or upset stomach?
6. What if I have problems taking my medicines or following my treatment plan?
7. Is this the right way to use my inhaler? How do I use my inhaler with a spacer?
8. Is this the right way to use my peak flow meter?
9. How can I tell if I'm having an asthma attack? What medicines should I take and how much of each should I take? When should I call you? When should I go to the emergency department?
10. Once my asthma is under control, will I be able to reduce the amount of medicine I'm taking?
11. When should I see you again?