

# Emergency Warning Signs

Serious warning signs require immediate help. Call 911 or go immediately to the emergency room if your child:

- Is unable to speak full sentences due to shortness of breath
- Has blue- or gray-tinged lips or nails
- Has strained neck and chest muscles with labored breathing
- Is breathing or panting rapidly
- Is extremely short of breath
- Is unable to walk, is listless and confused, or lacks energy

## Using a Peak Flow Meter

A peak flow meter is a tool that measures how much air your child can exhale to show if airways are narrowed. It can warn of airway changes before your child feels symptoms, so your child can take his/her medication and prevent an attack. It is also a good way to see how well a specific medication is working and to help the health care provider plan what medication is best for your child.



For more information about asthma, contact one of the following organizations:

American Lung Association  
1-800-LUNGUSA  
[www.lung.org](http://www.lung.org)

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America  
1-800-7-ASTHMA  
[www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm)

National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute  
1-301-592-8573  
[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

The above constitutes a sampling of organizations that provide information about asthma. Other organizations may be available in your area. We do not recommend or endorse any one organization.

This service is designed to provide you with general health education, information and support in making informed health care decisions. We do not diagnose, provide medical advice, or make treatment recommendations. Please see your benefit plan for a description of covered services. This service is not a substitute for medical care from your doctor. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider for any medical concerns or questions.

Copyright © 2016 Highmark Inc. All rights reserved.

These materials may not be copied or otherwise reproduced in any manner. 25511 7/16 CS206775

# Asthma Warning Signs

## How to Recognize and Control Them



# What Are Asthma Symptoms?



Children with asthma often get used to the way their symptoms make them feel. If you can answer “yes” to any of the following questions, you should contact your child’s health care provider to learn how to control symptoms:

1. Does your child have episodes of coughing or wheezing?
2. Does your child frequently clear his/her throat?
3. Is it hard for your child to take a deep breath?
4. Does your child frequently cough at night or while sleeping?
5. Does your child wake up at night unable to breathe?
6. Does your child have allergies?
7. Does your child have cold symptoms more than three months a year?
8. Does your child frequently miss school because of coughing or wheezing?
9. Does your child wheeze or have difficulty breathing when exercising?
10. Does your child use inhalers more than twice a week for coughing or wheezing flare-ups?
11. Do family members have breathing problems, asthma or allergies?

## Schedule Regular Health Care Provider Visits

Make sure to take your child to see the health care provider at least two times a year for your child’s asthma. Discuss whether your child needs to have a pulmonary function test. This test determines how much air your child’s lungs can hold, how quickly your child moves air in and out of the lungs, and how well your child’s lungs exchange oxygen and carbon dioxide. It is a good way to see how well your child’s asthma medication is working.

Good asthma control includes avoiding asthma triggers, using medications correctly, managing symptoms and developing an Asthma Action Plan.

**Avoid triggers** — Identify and avoid environmental factors and other things that cause your child to have an asthma attack, such as allergens, irritants, household products, infections and diseases, medications, and activities.

**Use medications** — Talk to your child’s health care provider about long-term controller medications that prevent attacks and rescue medications that provide quick relief from asthma symptoms.

Inhalers are used to breathe in medicine by mouth. Nebulizers let very young children breathe medication in a vapor or mist. Be sure to use medications exactly as prescribed by your child’s health care provider.

**Manage symptoms** — Monitor your child’s symptoms and report any problems or changes to your child’s health care provider. Note if symptoms come on quickly, or begin slowly and gradually get worse. Learn to detect attacks and to respond correctly — by handling early symptoms, contacting the health care provider or seeking immediate medical care.

**Develop an Asthma Action Plan** — Work with your child’s health care provider to create an Asthma Action Plan. The plan should include information about your child’s asthma symptoms, medications, and plans for an emergency, as well as any other additional information your child’s health care provider believes is necessary. Share the plan with your child’s school, day care or other providers. If your child must take medication during the day, contact the school or day care staff to learn about their policy and work out a plan.