

# Breathing Easier

A Special Newsletter  
for MVP Members



# Educating Yourself and Your Child

Educating yourself and your family about asthma is essential for you and your child to have control of the disease. If you understand asthma, you will have an easier time following the different aspects of treatment, such as avoiding substances that cause symptoms (triggers) and knowing what to do during an asthma attack.

## Educate yourself or your child about:

- **Asthma.** Learn all that you can from your doctor about asthma, such as the long-term effects of not treating asthma and the best ways for you or your child to manage the disease.
- **Medicines.** Learn all that you can about how each of your medicines or your child's medicines helps to treat asthma. Find out about side effects that may occur and what to do if side effects become bothersome.

Part of education is effectively communicating what you don't understand and what you are concerned about.

- Always ask questions when you don't understand something about the treatment.
- Discuss any fears and concerns that you or your child may have regarding treatment.

- Tell your doctor if treatment is disrupting your life; you may be able to find another way to treat your asthma with less disruption.
- Tell your doctor if treatment is not helping asthma attacks.
- Tell your doctor if you are not able to follow any aspect of your treatment.

If your child has asthma, you may want to talk with teachers and other school officials about asthma. They can help your child follow his or her treatment plans. You should have a copy of your child's asthma action plan (which tells what to do during an asthma attack) on file in the school office, with the school nurse, and with sports coaches so that school staff will know what to do if your child has an attack at school.

# Using an Asthma Action Plan

If you or your child has asthma that requires daily treatment, it is important to have an asthma action plan. An asthma action plan is a written plan that tells you what asthma medicine to take every day and how to treat an asthma attack. It can help you make quick decisions in case you are not able to think clearly during an attack.

## An asthma action plan usually includes:

- Treatment goals, which include your personal goals about your asthma.
- An outline of the medicines you take daily for asthma control and when to take them.
- An asthma diary where you can keep track of your symptoms, triggers, and other things that can help you manage asthma.
- Steps to take and medicines to use to treat an asthma attack early, before it becomes severe.
- What to do if an attack becomes an emergency, and where to get medical treatment.

Using an asthma action plan can help you stay active with fewer asthma problems. Following your plan is a big step toward controlling the disease so you can live the life you want.

## How to Use an Asthma Action Plan

### Develop Your Plan

- Work with your doctor to make an asthma action plan for you or your child. An action plan is based on zones that are defined by your symptoms, your peak flow, or both. There are three zones: **green**, **yellow**, and **red**. Your action plan tells you what to do when you are in each zone.
- Let your doctor know what you want regarding asthma care. For example, if you are not sure how to use your inhalers, tell your doctor.

- If you make an asthma action plan for your child, give a copy to the child's school or caregivers and make sure they know how to use it.

## Follow your daily treatment, and use the asthma action plan

- Take your daily medicines to help minimize long-term damage and avoid asthma attacks.
- Check your peak flow regularly, if your doctor recommends it. This can help you know how well your lungs are working.
- Check your action plan to see what zone you are in.

◦ **If you are in the green zone**, keep taking your daily asthma medicines as prescribed.

◦ **If you are in the yellow zone**, you may be having or will soon have an asthma attack. You may or may not have any symptoms, but your lungs are not working as well as they should. Take the medicines listed in your action plan. If you stay in the yellow zone, your doctor may need to increase the dose or add a medicine.

◦ **If you are in the red zone**, follow your action plan and call your doctor. If you can't get in touch with your doctor, go to the emergency department. Call **911** right away if you are having severe trouble breathing.

*(Continued on back page)*

MVP Health Care offers a condition health management program for members living with asthma. For more information or to see if you qualify, call **1-866-942-7966**. MVP's program is based on a collaborative guideline (including the NYSDOH, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, professional organizations, MVP and other health plans from across the state) derived from the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) Third Expert Report Clinical Guideline for the Diagnosis, Evaluation, and Management of Adults and Children with Asthma.

Information in this newsletter does not constitute medical advice. If you have questions about your health, talk to your doctor.

Health benefit plans are issued or administered by MVP Health Plan, Inc.; MVP Health Insurance Company; MVP Select Care, Inc.; and MVP Health Services Corp., operating subsidiaries of MVP Health Care, Inc. Not all plans available in all states and counties.



## Contact Us

For more information, call **1-866-942-7966**

Monday–Friday, 8:30 am–5:00 pm

TTY: **1-800-662-1220**

## We value your opinion.

Please fill out a brief, anonymous survey at **mvplistsens.com**. We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members. All responses are 100 percent confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.



- Use an asthma diary to track your peak flow readings, your symptoms, or both. If you have an attack, write down what caused it (if you know), the symptoms, and what medicine you took.

## Review the Plan with Your Doctor

- Take both the asthma action plan and the asthma diary when you see your doctor. Get answers to any questions you have about your asthma plan or your symptoms. Let your doctor know if treatment is not controlling your asthma attacks.
- Take your medicines so your doctor can review your treatment. Also take your peak flow meter if you have one.
- Make sure you know how and when to call your doctor or go to the hospital.
- Tell your doctor if you are having trouble following your action plan.

# YOUR MVP ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

● Personal Best Peak Flow  
●  
●

### GREEN ZONE *Use preventive medicine*

You have **ALL** of these:

- Breathing is good
- No cough or wheeze
- Sleep through the night
- Can work or play

GO

Peak flow from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Medicine	How Much	How Often/When

For asthma with exercise, take:

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### YELLOW ZONE *Add quick-relief medicine*

You have **ANY** of these:

- First signs of a cold
- Exposure to known trigger
- Cough or mild wheeze
- Tight chest
- Coughing all night

CAUTION

Peak flow from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Medicine	How Much	How Often/When

Call your primary care provider.

### RED ZONE *Get help from a doctor*

Your asthma is getting **worse fast**:

- Medicine is not helping
- Breathing is hard and fast
- Nose opens wide
- Ribs show
- Can't talk well

DANGER

Peak flow reading below \_\_\_\_\_

Make an appointment with your primary care provider within two days of an emergency room visit or hospitalization.

Medicine	How Much	How Often/When

**GET HELP FROM A DOCTOR NOW!** Do not be afraid of causing a fuss. Your doctor will want to see you right away. It's important! If you cannot contact your doctor, go directly to the emergency room. **DO NOT WAIT!**

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