A Special Newsletter for MVP Health Care® Members

Breathing Easier

Contact Us
For more information: 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 mvplistens.com.
We will use this information to create a better experience for all of our members.
All responses are 100% confidential. The survey only takes a few minutes to complete.

MVP Health Care offers a 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.

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Asthma Triggers

An asthma trigger is a factor that can lead to sudden difficulty breathing or other symptoms of asthma (asthma attack).

Some triggers are substances a person may be allergic to (allergens). Allergens cause the body’s natural defenses (immune system) to produce chemicals called immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies. These chemicals bind to allergens, causing inflammation of the bronchial tubes, which carry air to the lungs. The allergen may also cause asthma attacks.

These triggers include:
Animal dander, cockroach droppings, dust mites, mold, and pollen.

Other triggers can cause asthma symptoms without affecting the body’s immune system. These include:

• Cigarette smoke and air pollution.
• Viral infections, such as colds and influenza, and sinus and other upper respiratory infections.
• Exercise. Many people with asthma have symptoms when they exercise.
• Dry, cold air.
• Medicines, such as aspirin or beta-blockers.
• In adults, hormones, including those involved in pregnancy and menstrual periods (just before or during periods).
• Gastrointestinal reflux disease (GERD) may make asthma worse for some.
It can be difficult to know whether your child is having a mild, moderate, or severe asthma attack. The following chart may help you. Talk with a doctor if you are unable to tell how severe your child’s symptoms are.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mild Attack</th>
<th>Moderate Attack</th>
<th>Severe Attack</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peak expiratory flow</strong></td>
<td>80% to 100% of personal best</td>
<td>50% to 79% of personal best</td>
<td>Less than 50% of personal best</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breathing</strong></td>
<td>Normal or slightly faster</td>
<td>Faster than normal</td>
<td>Rapid, and the child may appear preoccupied with breathing; may want to sit upright to help breathing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breath</strong></td>
<td>Mild or no shortness of breath; can speak in full sentences</td>
<td>Short of breath; can speak in short phrases or parts of sentences</td>
<td>Very short of breath; speaks in single words or short phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chest</strong></td>
<td>Does not or slightly uses chest muscles to breathe</td>
<td>Uses chest and neck muscles to breathe. The skin between, under, and above the ribs collapses inward with each breath.</td>
<td>Uses chest and neck muscles to breathe and may open nostrils wide; may clutch at the chest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Skin</strong></td>
<td>Normal skin color</td>
<td>Pale skin color</td>
<td>Very pale or bluish skin color; may sweat more than normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wheezing</strong></td>
<td>Wheezes while breathing out</td>
<td>Wheezes while breathing in and out</td>
<td>Does not wheeze while breathing. This indicates little or no air in the airways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alertness</strong></td>
<td>Normally alert</td>
<td>Normally alert</td>
<td>Not as alert as usual and may appear anxious</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Back to School with Asthma Checklist

- Develop an Asthma Action Plan with your child’s doctor.
- Find out if your child can carry medications while at school. If so, fill out all permission forms for this privilege.
- Mark all medications with your child’s name, the name of the medication and complete instructions on how it should be used.
- Learn your school’s asthma policies and asthma emergency procedures.
- Talk to your school nurse and your child’s teacher about your child’s asthma and review the Asthma Action Plan.
- Provide the school with your emergency contact information and that of at least two back-up individuals.

Source: American Lung Association

Go online and take charge of your health.

The MVP Healthwise® Knowledgebase is your one-stop resource for the latest health information. Visit mvphealthcare.com and select Members, then Health & Wellness.

Are you due for important health screenings?

Regular screenings are important to help maintain your overall health. For screenings that are appropriate for your age and sex, visit mvphealthcare.com/PreventiveCare and talk to your doctor.
Quick Tips for Being Prepared to Talk to Your Doctor

Patients who have good relationships with their doctors are more satisfied with their care and have better results. Here are some tips to help you and your doctor become better partners in improving your health care:

- Write down questions before your visit. List the most important ones first to make sure they get answered.
- Bring an up to date “health history” list with you.
- Always bring any medications you are taking, including over-the-counter, or a list of those medications (include when and how often you take them) and what strength.
- You might want to bring someone along to help you ask questions and remember the answers.
- Find more information and printable forms at mvphealthcare.com.

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)