

Caring for your child with asthma

After a visit to the Pediatric Inpatient Unit

Your child's asthma medications




Type of medication	Name of medication	How much	How often	Specific Instructions
Rescue/ Reliever Medication				
Controller/ Preventer Medication				
Other medication (such as antibiotics or steroids)				

Your child's follow-up appointments

	Asthma or Allergy Doctor	Pediatrician or Family Doctor	Asthma Educator
Name:			
Date:			
Time:			
Place:			

What to watch for and when to get help

The nurse and/or doctor will talk to you about how to control your child's asthma and what medications will help. For the next few days, use this chart to know what to do when your child has asthma symptoms. At your clinic visit, the nurse and/or doctor will help you learn more about asthma and give you a complete 'Asthma Action Plan' for your child.

		What to do
Signs that your child's asthma is UNDER CONTROL		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No asthma symptoms during the day or night (no coughing or wheezing). Seldom uses rescue medication. Can do normal activities (such as playing, gym class or sports) without symptoms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to check your child's asthma symptoms. Keep your child away from avoidable triggers. Give medications as directed.
Signs that your child's asthma is OUT OF CONTROL		
Mild to Moderate Worsening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms during daily activities. Symptoms during the night, or awakens even one night a week with symptoms. Needs rescue medication more than 3 times a week. Unable to play or exercise without symptoms. A cold or flu may cause asthma to get worse within 1 to 2 days. 	If you notice any of these signs in the last 24 hours, adjust "controller" medication quickly, as directed by your doctor.
Severe Worsening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symptoms all day. Difficulty sleeping or symptoms lasting all night. Rescue medication relieves symptoms for less than 2 hours. Difficulty talking or walking. Breathing is fast or difficult, or the rescue medication does not relieve the symptoms. Fear symptoms are getting worse. 	Get help right away if your child has had any severe asthma episodes in the past. If your child has severe worsening: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give 3 to 4 puffs of rescue medication every 10 to 15 minutes until you get medical help Go to the nearest hospital emergency department or call 911

Here are the answers to some common questions about asthma. You will learn more about asthma and your child's 'Asthma Action Plan' at your clinic visit.

What is asthma?

Asthma (**az**-muh) is a condition that affects a person's breathing. Normally, we breathe in through our noses or mouths and the air goes into the windpipe, travels through the airways and into the lungs. For most of us breathing is easy. But for children with asthma, breathing can be more difficult. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be controlled.

What is an asthma flare-up?

With an asthma flare-up the airways in the lungs can clog up with mucous or the muscles around the airway can tighten, making it difficult to breathe.

How do asthma medications help?

There are two kinds of medicines for treating asthma:

1. Reliever or rescue medication

Reliever medications relax the tightened muscles around the airway. This "opens" the airway and makes breathing easier. In other words, the medication relieves your child's wheeze or cough and rescues his/her breathing. They work to help your child right away and help when he/she has a flare-up.

2. Controller or preventer medication

Controller medications work over a long period of time to help control asthma symptoms. These medications work to stop the mucous from building up in the airways and from the inflammation that occurs. Your child may need to start taking (or take more of) a controller medication during a flare-up, but it doesn't help rescue him/her during a flare-up. Some children need to take their preventer medication every day to control their asthma.

What are triggers?

Triggers are things that can make your child's asthma worse. Some triggers make the lungs clog up with mucous and swell; other triggers can cause the airway muscles to tighten making it harder to breathe. Each person with asthma has different triggers. Knowing what your child's triggers are will help you control his/her asthma.

Triggers that cause the lungs to swell and fill with mucous	Triggers that cause airway muscles to tighten
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• allergens• smoke• respiratory infections, like a cold or the flu	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exercise• cold air or a change in temperature• humidity• pollution• emotion and stress

Where can I get more information?

For more information about asthma, call the Family Asthma Education Program at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, 905-522-1155, ext 38403.

If you have a question about your clinic appointment, call the clinic where you have the appointment. This information should be on the appointment card.