

## Staying on top of your asthma

The best way to stay on top of your asthma is to have a written plan of action so you'll know what to do if your asthma gets worse, or if it gets better. Your GP or asthma nurse can fill this in with you and if you don't have one you can get one free from [www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk) or by calling us on **0800 121 62 44**, or ask your GP for one.

## Vaccinations

You can talk to your GP or asthma nurse about having the flu vaccination. This usually happens in the autumn. You can also talk to them about the pneumococcal vaccination which protects you from pneumococcal infection.

## Stopping smoking


Smoking can make asthma medicines less effective, increase the risk of an asthma attack and permanently damage your airways. Stopping smoking can be difficult, but it will have a massive impact on your asthma. You can ask your GP or asthma nurse for advice about stop smoking services and nicotine replacement therapy.

 If you would like to discuss asthma reviews or written asthma action plans with an asthma nurse specialist, call the **Asthma UK Helpline 0800 121 62 44**

**Asthma UK has a range of resources to help with your asthma and a team of specialist asthma nurses if you need further advice.**

 **Asthma UK Helpline**  
0800 121 62 44

 **info@asthma.org.uk**

 **Or visit our website**  
[www.asthma.org.uk](http://www.asthma.org.uk)



*with you every  
breath of the way*



# your asthma review



**Your chance to tell your GP or asthma nurse how your asthma is affecting you, so you can agree a plan of action together.**



*with you every  
breath of the way*



## Are you on top of your asthma?

If you take the right medicines in the correct way you should rarely have asthma symptoms. Many people put up with lots of different asthma symptoms, sometimes without realising that it doesn't have to be this way.

By having a regular asthma review and using an asthma action plan you can get better control over your asthma, **meaning you're less likely to have asthma symptoms or an asthma attack.**

### Your asthma isn't well controlled if you're:

- Using your reliever inhaler more and more
- Waking at night with wheezing, shortness of breath, a tight chest or coughing
- Having to take time off work or school because of your asthma
- Feeling that you can't keep up with your normal day-to-day activities or exercise

If any of these sound familiar to you, arrange an asthma review or a more urgent appointment to help you get back on top of your asthma.



## When should you see your GP/ nurse?

You should have a review every year (every 6 months for children) even if you're happy with your asthma treatment, but there are other times when you should go and speak to your GP or nurse about your asthma.

### Within 48 hours if:



- You had a serious attack
- You've had to go to hospital for your asthma
- You're running out of inhalers
- Your peak flow is dropping
- Your symptoms are getting worse
- You're waking at night because of asthma or not being able to do your usual daily activities
- You're off work or school because of asthma



## What happens at a review?

It's a chance to check how you're getting on with your asthma.

You can discuss how to avoid any triggers that set off your asthma or concerns about side effects of your medicines.

Think about what you want to ask at the review. Have you thought about...



**You'll need to see your GP after an attack to make sure you're starting to get your symptoms under control. You'll need another review within two weeks of the attack to make sure you're getting better and to make changes to your medicines and action plan.**



**Within a week if:**

- You're **worried** about medicines or side effects
- You're using your reliever more than **three times a week**



**Within a month if:**

- You started a **new medicine**
- Your medicine has been **changed/adjusted**
- You're still having symptoms despite taking your medicines



**After 12 weeks if:**

- You've had no symptoms and haven't used your reliever for at least 12 weeks to talk about reducing your medicines



**Every year if:**

- You've **few or no** asthma symptoms
- You're **happy** with your asthma treatment
- You'd like to **review your asthma action plan**



**According to seasonal triggers if:**

- You **get hay fever**, go the month before it usually starts
- You **get winter coughs and colds**, go in late August/September
- You **need a flu jab**, go in the autumn
- You're going on **holiday**
- **School-age children should go in August before they go back to school**

- **Am I on the right dose of medicine?**
- **Is my medicine working?**
- **Is this the best inhaler for me?**
- **Is my inhaler technique right? (Remember, take your inhalers with you to show your technique!)**
- **What situations seem to make my asthma worse?**
- **What should I do in an asthma emergency/asthma attack?**

**Your GP or asthma nurse should also check your peak flow reading and ask you:**

- 1 Have you had trouble sleeping because of your asthma symptoms (including cough)?
- 2 Have you had your usual asthma symptoms during the day?
- 3 Has your asthma stopped you from doing your normal day-to-day activities (eg housework or work)?