

Asthma Action Plan

An asthma action plan is a written guide to help people be aware of their asthma symptoms and what medicines to use and when to take them.

There are three zones or steps in the asthma action plan. If peak flows are used, the readings are also part of the plan.

Zone	Symptoms	Medicines
Green Zone: Asthma is doing very well.	- Breathing: Easy - Nighttime asthma cough: Rare - Exercise-induced symptoms: Mild, easily treated - Peak flow: 80% or greater of personal best	- Controller medicine, if prescribed: Take daily - Rescue medicine: Used as needed for quick-relief or before exercise
Yellow Zone: Asthma is getting worse.	- Coughing, wheezing, chest tightness - Nighttime waking: Some - Can do some, but not all, usual activities - Peak flow: 50-79% of personal best - Call your doctor	- Continue all controller medicines as prescribed “Step-up” medicine added (such as inhaled corticosteroid) - Rescue medicine: every 3-4 hours as needed for symptoms
Red Zone: Severe asthma signs, yellow zone medicines are not helping.	- Cough or wheezing: Almost all the time - Nighttime waking: Often - Breathing: Fast - Shortness of breath - Peak flow: Less than 50% of personal best - Call your doctor	- Rescue medicine: use right away and repeat in 15-20 minutes if needed for symptoms; call or see your doctor “Step-up” medicine added: oral corticosteroids (such as prednisone)

Call 911 right away if:

- You are not able to talk in complete sentences.
- You are not able to walk due to difficult breathing.
- Your chest or neck muscles are pulling in with each breath.
- You are not responding to rescue medicine (albuterol).
- Your lips or nail beds are turning blue.

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 2/2026 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#6129