

controlling **your asthma**
an asthma self-management plan



Asthma Can Be Controlled

If you or your child have asthma, you are not alone. Nearly 20 million Americans also have this condition. Risks of uncontrolled asthma may include asthma attacks, scarring of the airways, Emergency Department visits, hospitalization, and even death. There is no cure for asthma, but it can be controlled in most people.

With proper self-care and the help of your health care team, you can be free of asthma symptoms. Kaiser Permanente wants to help you control your asthma. Using this self-management plan will help you breathe easier so you can live a healthy, active life.



Asthma Medicines

“Controller”/“Preventer” Medicines

Take *daily* as prescribed for long-term control (see Green Zone on page 2).

Examples: QVAR, Advair, cromolyn (Intal), Pulmicort, Tilade, Flovent, Singulair, Accolate, Aerobid, Azmacort, Asmanex, and Symbicort.

Serevent or Foradil may be used as a booster (or add-on) but not alone.

“Quick-Relief” Medicines

Take for quick relief (see Yellow and Red Zones on pages 3 and 4). Take 5 to 10 minutes before exercise, if needed. Do not overuse—know the “Rule of 2s” (see page 6).

Examples: albuterol (Proventil, Ventolin, and ProAir), Alupent, Maxair, Xopenex, and Atrovent.

“Burst” Medicines

These medicines may be prescribed for use during a severe asthma attack (see Red Zone on page 4). Ask your asthma care professional if a “Burst” medicine is right for you.

Examples: prednisone, Medrol, Prelone, Pediapred, and Orapred.

Green Zone...Go ahead

Your asthma is in good control

No symptoms:

- You can sleep without waking
- You are wheeze-free
- You rarely need "Quick-Relief" medicines (except for exercise)
- You can participate in most activities without asthma symptoms
- You do not miss work or school
- You rarely, if ever, need emergency care

Go ahead...

Take "Controller"/"Preventer" medicine(s) *daily* as prescribed to keep asthma in good control.



Yellow Zone...Be aware

You are having a mild asthma attack

Symptoms may include:

- Some coughing
- Mild wheezing
- Slight chest congestion and/or tightness
- Breathing when resting may be slightly faster than normal
- Peak flow is 50 to 80 percent of your "personal best"

Be aware...

1. Take "Quick-Relief" medicine every 4 hours as needed to relieve symptoms.
2. Continue to take "Controller" medicine as prescribed **or** adjust your medication if directed by your physician:

3. If symptoms continue more than 2 days, or if "Quick-Relief" medicine is needed more than every 4 hours, see Red Zone on page 4. Call for advice if needed.



Red Zone...Stop and take action

You are having a severe asthma attack

Symptoms may include:

- Constant coughing and/or wheezing
- Difficulty breathing when at rest
- Waking from sleep because of coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
- Peak flow level is 50 percent or below your “personal best”

Take action...

If you need “Quick-Relief” medicine every 2 to 4 hours and you still have Red Zone symptoms:

1. Start “Burst” medicine if prescribed by your asthma care professional. Keep in mind that it may take 4 to 6 hours for “Burst” medicine to work.
2. You may take “Quick-Relief” medicine every 20 minutes for up to 1 hour.

However, if shortness of breath is causing you difficulty walking or talking, or in the case of a child, there is sucking in between the ribs, widening of the nostrils, or blue lips, go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911 **now!**

3. **If you have tried the first two steps and there is no relief**, you are having a severe asthma attack. **Go to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911 now**, and continue to take “Quick Relief” medicine as needed.

Always tell your asthma care professional

when you have had a severe asthma attack.

If you are thinking of changing or stopping

your asthma medicine(s) be sure to talk with

your asthma care professional first.



Control Your Asthma

- **Read and fill in your information**

Fill in “My Asthma Plan,” keep it current, and refer to it when needed.

- **Avoid triggers**

Triggers are things that make asthma worse, such as colds, dust, pets, or smoke. Avoid triggers when you can.

- **Check your peak flow level**

If you have a peak flow meter (early warning tool), check your readings as often as directed by your asthma care professional.

- **Know your color zones**

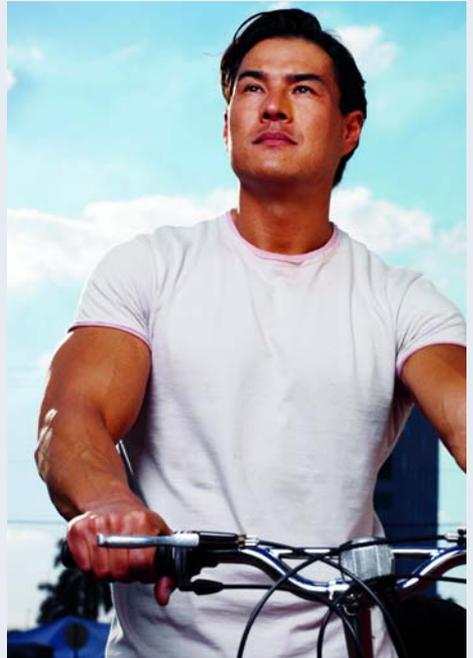
For good asthma control it is important to know the color zones. Think of a stop light and what each color means.

- **Take your medicines as prescribed**

Know the different kinds of medicines prescribed for you **and** how and when to take them. Talk to your asthma care professional if you have questions.

- **Know the “Rule of 2s”**

If you take “Quick-Relief” medicine more than **2** times a week (except for exercise), or if asthma wakes you more than **2** times a month, tell your asthma care professional that your asthma is **not in good control**.



My Asthma Plan

Asthma Medicines

- “Controller”/“Preventer” Medicine(s)
Take **daily** for long-term asthma control

- “Quick-Relief” Medicine

- “Burst” Medicine

Peak Flow Levels

- Personal best _____
- 50 to 80 percent level _____
- 50 percent level _____

Contact Information

- Name of Asthma Care Professional(s)

- Call Center (Appointments/Advice/Messages)

- To contact your local Health Education Department, call the Healthy Living Programs and Services toll-free number at 1-866-402-4320.

Kaiser Permanente Resources

- **Kaiser Permanente Healthwise® Handbook**
(refer to Asthma)
- **Kaiser Permanente Web Site**
kp.org or kp.org/asthma

If you think you have an emergency medical condition*, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital.

**An emergency medical condition is a medical or psychiatric condition that manifests itself by acute symptoms of sufficient severity (including severe pain) such that you could reasonably expect the absence of immediate medical attention to result in serious jeopardy to your health or serious impairment or dysfunction of your bodily functions or organs.*





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