

Taking Care of Your Child's Asthma

How Do I Take Care of My Child's Asthma?

- Know about triggers.
- Work with your child's provider for ongoing asthma care.
- Make an asthma action plan. It will help you know what to do for your child during a flare-up and what to do in an emergency.
- Your child should take his/her medicines as prescribed. Make sure that you understand how and when to give the medicines. Ask questions! Your provider wants you and your child to understand about the medicines.
- If you want to use home remedies or an over-the-counter cold medicine, be sure to check with your child's provider. Some traditional remedies may be helpful, but you should confirm this with the provider. Over-the-counter cold medicine does not help asthma, and may do harm.

What Kinds of Medications Does My Child Take for Asthma?

There are two kinds of asthma medicines. Your child may be given one or both kinds. It is important to take them as prescribed, because they do different things in the body.

- **Long-term controller (maintenance):** This kind of medicine helps to keep the airways from becoming sensitive and lowers the chance of a flare-up. A controller is used every day, *even when your child feels good*. A controller helps to keep your child feeling well.
- **Rescue medicine or quick reliever (short-acting bronchodilator):** Even when taking a controller, there may be times when your child has a flare-up. Once a flare-up starts, a rescue medicine is needed to stop it. Also, they can help to prevent flare-ups caused by exercise or physical activity or play. If your child is using the rescue medicine three or more times a week, your child may need more controller medicine – talk to your provider.



For more information call Customer Service at **(415) 615-4555**.
Or visit www.healthysanfrancisco.org

What About Peak Flow Readings?

Children older than 5 years can usually use a peak flow meter. A peak flow meter measures the airflow in the lungs. Your child's asthma action plan will be based on his/her best air flow. A peak flow meter can actually point to a problem with the lungs before your child begins to show other symptoms. One of the best things you can do for your child is to get educated about your child's asthma. Talk to your provider.

What Do I Do About Asthma at School or Daycare?

There should be a plan for how your child will manage his/her asthma at school. The plan should be between you, your child, the teacher and the school nurse or principal/director. It should be based on the asthma action plan you get from your provider.

Parents'/Guardians' Role

- Give the school/daycare a copy of the asthma action plan. Be sure to get the provider to fill it out and get it back to the school.
- Give a written list of your child's early warning signs of an asthma flare-up.
- Give a written list of known triggers. Be sure to point out if your child's asthma is triggered by exercise or playing hard. (In that case, the coach may make sure your child uses their inhaler before practice). Make sure the coach/gym teacher is in on the plan for what to do in the event of a flare-up.

- Give the school a list of medicines taken and when they should be given. Also include whether the medicines have any side effects for your child. Some children may need to have medicines at school. Work with the school to make sure your child can either carry their medicines or that they are stored at school in a place that is easy to get to.

Keep Your Child at Home If He/She Has These Signs:

- Infection, sore throat, swollen or painful neck.
- Fever over 100 degrees.
- Wheezing or coughing that lasts after taking medicine.
- Hard time breathing or very fast breathing.
- Abnormal peak flow readings. Follow your asthma action plan guidelines.

More information about asthma management in San Francisco schools can be found here:

www.sfgov3.org/index.aspx?page=702

RAMP has downloadable asthma action plans in multiple languages:

www.rampasthma.org

Adapted from:

Control Your Child's Asthma by Harold Farber, M.D. and Michael Boyette and from

www.rampasthma.org

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