



Taking charge of your child's asthma



You can take charge of your child's asthma

Asthma is an illness that causes swelling in the airways of the lungs, making it hard for your child to breathe.

Asthma is always in your child's lungs, even when he or she doesn't feel sick. Symptoms get much worse during an attack, so it is important to know your child's triggers.

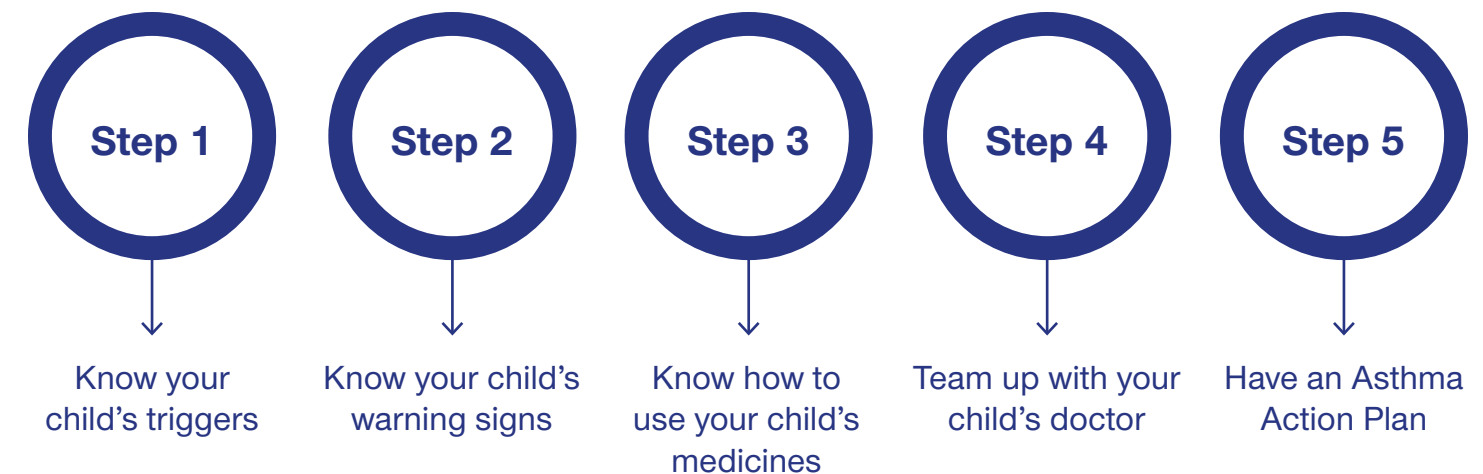
Doctors don't know why some children have asthma and others don't. Medicine won't make it go away for good, but there are things you can do to help your child deal with asthma.

Know the signs of asthma

- Coughing, often at night or during exercise
- Wheezing or whistling sound when your child breathes out
- Shortness of breath or fast breathing
- Frequent colds that settle in the chest

Your child could have all of these problems, or just one. They may come and go. It is important to keep track so you can learn what triggers asthma in your child.

5 simple steps to help you take charge



1

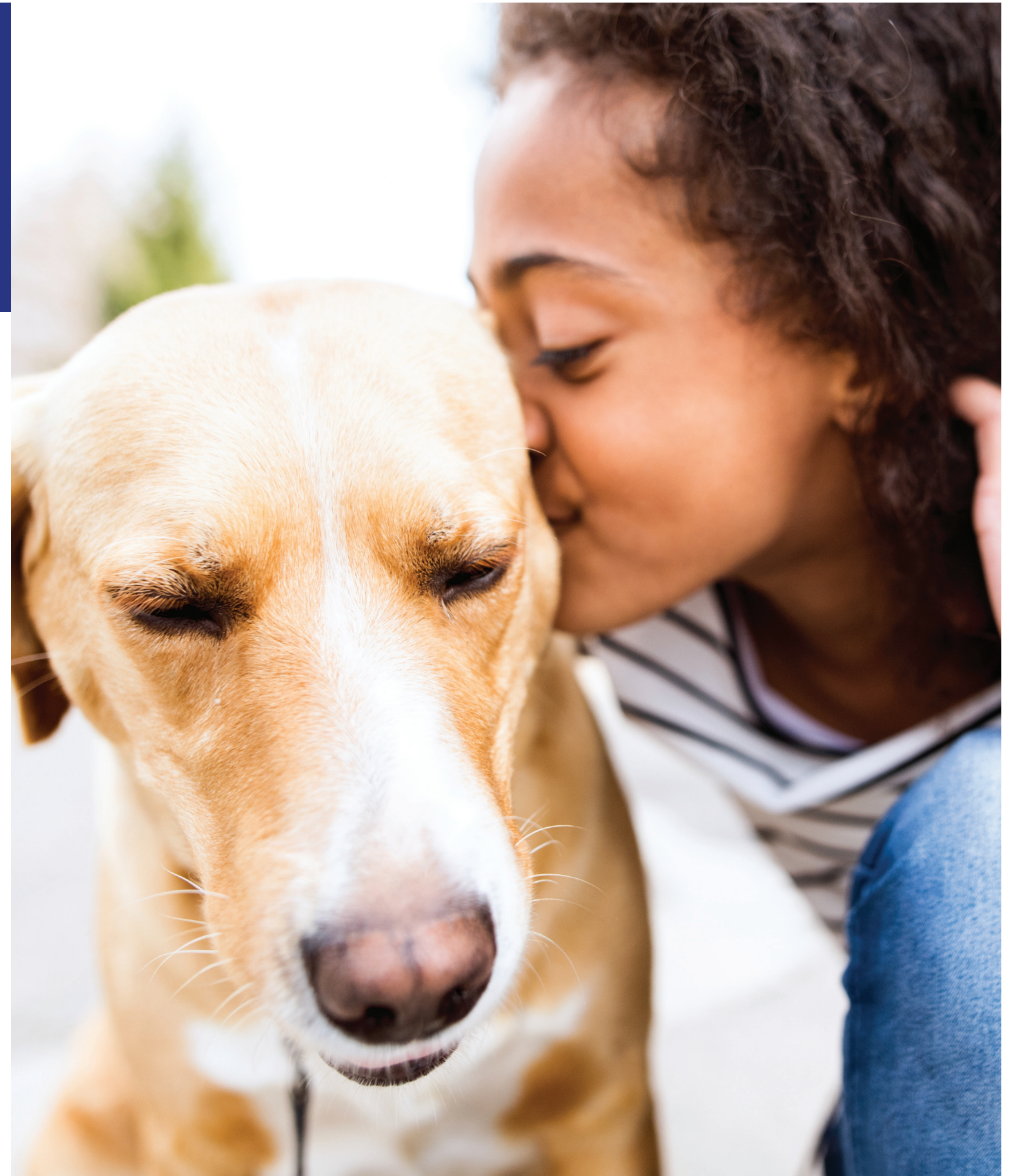
Know your child's triggers

An asthma trigger* is something that makes your child's symptoms worse. Triggers vary from child to child. It is important to learn what those triggers are for your child, so you can avoid them as much as possible. If you can't avoid them, have your child's medicine ready.

- Animals with fur
- Secondhand smoke
- Weather changes
- Not exercising properly
- Being sick or allergies
- Pollen, pollution, strong odors or dust mites

Note for parents: Being around adults who smoke is very bad for a child with asthma. You can get help to quit smoking. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit smokingstopshere.com and smokefree.gov to find out more.

*Not all asthma triggers are listed above



2

Know your child's warning signs

An asthma attack can happen fast. This can be scary for your child. It can also be hard for your child to tell you how he or she is feeling. That's why it's important to look for warning signs that your child may be struggling.

Keep track of when your child is having trouble. This will help you identify triggers and prevent asthma attacks.

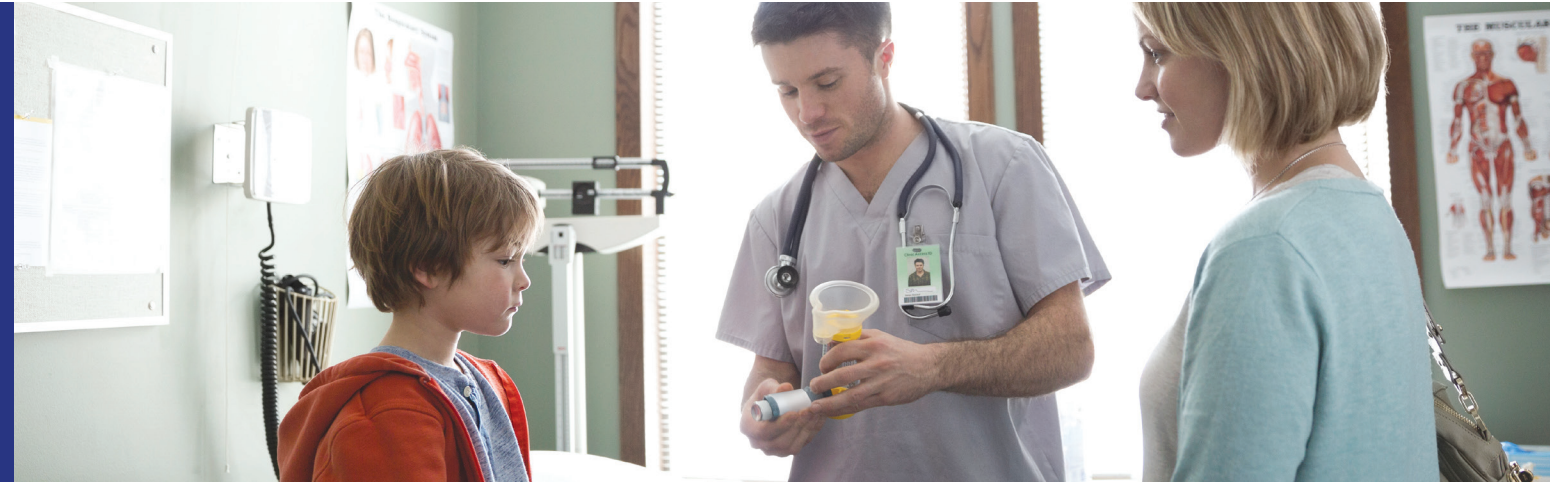
- Time of day, like night or early morning
- Time of year, like spring or fall
- While your child is active, like running or playing sports
- When your child is showing stress or emotion, like crying or laughing
- When your child is around asthma triggers and the places where the triggers are found

Make note of patterns and symptoms. Be sure to discuss them with your child's doctor. This will help the doctor suggest medicines and other treatments that will work best for your child.



3

Know how to use your child's medicines



It can be really hard to avoid your child's asthma triggers. Make sure you know how to use your child's medicine to keep them safe. This will help you avoid trips to the emergency room.

There are 2 kinds of medicine for asthma symptoms:

1 Quick, temporary relief

This inhaler is used at the first sign of an asthma attack. This type of inhaler is known as a rescue inhaler, and is used as needed. It should stop problems like coughing, wheezing or shortness of breath. It should only be used when needed and does not replace the controller. Your child should have this medicine with him or her at all times.

2 Long-term control

This inhaler should be used every day, and is known as a controller. It controls asthma symptoms by helping airways stay open. If your child uses this kind of medicine, he or she may not have as many asthma attacks over time. Or, the attacks may be milder.

Be sure to use your child's medicines exactly as the doctor tells you. Never leave medicines within your child's reach. You should always help your child take asthma medicine.

Tips for using your child's medicine

Your child may use an inhaler with both kinds of medicine. Your child may also use a machine called a nebulizer.

Inhaler

- An inhaler gets medicine right into your child's lungs
- Inhalers can be hard for younger children to use. A spacer can help if your child has trouble. This is attached to the inhaler.
- Bring your child's inhaler with you when you visit the doctor. The doctor or the doctor's nurse can make sure your child is using it correctly. A pharmacist can also help.

Nebulizer

- This is also called a breathing machine. It creates a mist of medicine.
- Your child uses a mask to breathe in the mist for 5-10 minutes

Peak flow meter

- Your peak flow meter will show you how much air your child can breathe into his or her lungs
- Ask your doctor how often your child's peak flow should be checked. Be sure to write it down on your child's Asthma Action Plan.

4

Team up with your child's doctor

Children with asthma need extra care. In fact, you might see more than one doctor.



A primary doctor

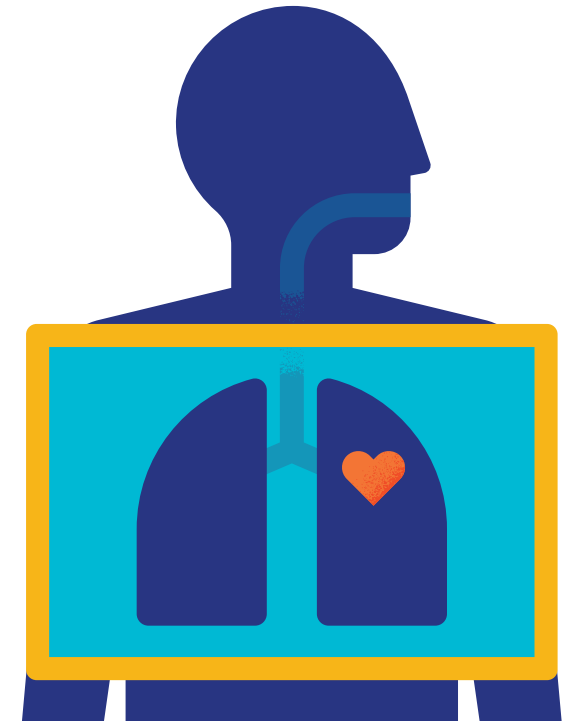
Your child should have a primary doctor who can treat his or her condition. If your child doesn't have a primary doctor, we can help you find one. Call Member Services at the number on the back of your child's member ID card.

You can also find a primary doctor by visiting myuhc.com/communityplan and using the Find a Doctor tool.



A specialist

Your child may also see an allergy doctor (or allergist) or a lung doctor (or pulmonologist). This could happen if your child has lots of symptoms or frequent attacks.



Ask your doctor

Use the questions below to discuss your child's Asthma Action Plan.

What medicines should my child take for asthma problems?

Quick relief: _____

Long-term/daily: _____

Is my child using the inhaler the right way?

What do I do if I see my child having problems?

How and when should my child use a peak flow meter?

How can I help my child find the best peak flow reading?

Is the yearly flu vaccine right for my child? _____

What is my child's Asthma Action Plan? _____

What are my child's triggers? _____

How do we avoid them? _____

Can my child go outside? _____

Other questions you may have: _____

5

Have an Asthma Action Plan

An **Asthma Action Plan** is a written record of your child's treatment plan. You and your child's doctor should complete it together. Review it at each visit to make sure it's up-to-date.

Keep your child's Asthma Action Plan in a handy place at home. Share it with family members and anyone who cares for your child. That includes teachers, the school nurse, caregivers and coaches. It will tell them what to do if symptoms flare up. Be sure they have access to quick-relief medicines too. It will tell them what to do if your child starts to have problems.



The signs of asthma can be put into 3 zones: go, caution and danger. Know what your Action Plan is for each zone.



Your Asthma Action Plan

Bring this with you to your child's doctor. You can use it to help guide you on when to give your child medicine and seek help based on your child's plan for each zone.

Patient name: _____

GO – You are doing well	Peak flow	Use these daily controller medicines		
You have all of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breathing is good No cough or wheezing Sleep through the night Can go to school and play 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
<input type="text"/>				

CAUTION – Slow down	Peak flow	Continue with controller medicine and add:		
You have any of these: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First signs of a cold Cough or mild wheeze Tight chest Trouble breathing, especially at night 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
<input type="text"/>				

DANGER – Get help	Peak flow	Take these medicines and call your doctor now.		
Your asthma is getting worse fast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medicine is not helping Breathing is hard and fast Nose opens wide Ribs show Severe wheezing 	from:	Medicine	Dose	How often
	<input type="text"/>			
	to:			
<input type="text"/>				

Helpful resources

For more information, visit these websites:

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America
aafa.org

American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
acaai.org

American Lung Association
lung.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
cdc.gov/asthma; cdc.gov/copd

UnitedHealthcare Community Plan
myuhc.com/communityplan
uhcommunityplan.com



If there's an emergency, call 911.



Important contacts

Doctor's name: _____ Phone: _____
Pharmacy: _____ Phone: _____
Urgent care: _____ Phone: _____
Hospital: _____ Phone: _____

Notes

We care about your health

We're here to help you get the care you need,
that works best for you, when you need it.

uhcommunityplan.com

