



# PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

## PEDIATRICS

# Childhood Asthma Management in Primary Care

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### WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a lung condition that makes it hard to breathe because the small airways in the lungs get swollen and narrow. Children with asthma may wheeze, cough, have trouble breathing, or say their chest feels tight. Asthma often starts in kids. It can run in families or be caused by things in the environment. Asthma in children can be mild or very serious. Asthma can be very dangerous if it's not treated.

Staying away from things that trigger asthma can keep your child healthy.

- Common indoor triggers: dust, mold, smoke, and pets.<sup>2</sup>
- Common outdoor triggers: trees, grass, weeds, and air pollution.

Doctors often use a test called *spirometry* to see if your child has asthma. It shows how much air your child's lungs can hold and how well they can blow air out.<sup>1</sup> It helps doctors see how well your child's lungs are working.<sup>1</sup>

### WHAT IS ASTHMA?




The goal of treating asthma is to keep your child safe and healthy. Medicines can help prevent asthma attacks and help your child live a normal life. Doctors treat asthma to help your child have fewer symptoms and keep their lungs healthy. They try not to use strong medicines. They also try to make sure your child's medicines don't cause problems.

Your child's treatment depends on how bad their asthma is.<sup>3</sup> Most children use two types of medicine:

- A quick-relief inhaler: Used when your child can't breathe well.
- A daily medicine: Used every day to stop asthma attacks. It keeps the lungs calm.

### What Can I Do at Home?

There are many things you can do at home to help control your child's asthma and keep their lungs healthy.

		
<b>Exercise</b>	<b>Healthy Eating</b>	<b>Avoid Triggers</b>
Daily exercise can help your lungs get stronger. <sup>4</sup> If your child has trouble breathing while playing, stop, and have them use their inhaler if they need it. <sup>4</sup>	Eating fruits and vegetables can help your lungs and overall health. <sup>5</sup>	Try to stay away from things that make asthma worse. These include smoke, dust, mold, and dirty air. <sup>1</sup>  Staying away from these can help stop asthma attacks and make it easier to breathe. <sup>1</sup>

### When Should I Call the Doctor?

If your child has trouble breathing, wheezing, or a cough that doesn't get better after using their inhaler, get help right away.

### RESOURCES

Below are trusted resources for parents with more information on asthma.

- American Lung Association: <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/managing-asthma/children-and-asthma>
- Nationwide Children's Hospital: <https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/family-resources-education/health-wellness-and-safety-resources/resources-for-parents-and-kids/asthma-program-resources>

### SOURCES

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3. Global Initiative for Asthma. Global strategy for asthma management and prevention. [https://ginasthma.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/GINA-2024-Strategy-Report-24\\_05\\_22\\_WMS.pdf](https://ginasthma.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/GINA-2024-Strategy-Report-24_05_22_WMS.pdf)
4. American Lung Association. Being active with asthma. <https://www.lung.org/lung-health-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/asthma/managing-asthma/asthma-and-exercise> Zhang J, He M, Yu Q, Xiao F, Zhang Y, Liang C. The effects of a healthy diet on asthma and wheezing in children and adolescents: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *J Asthma Allergy*. 2023;16:1007-1024. doi: 10.2147/JAA.5423884