

## **Six Actions to Control Asthma**

Whether making a shopping list or mapping a fire-exit strategy, planning can be useful. It can even be *life saving*.

This holds true for asthma, a chronic disease that inflames and narrows the airways and can make those affected by it feel as if they are breathing through a straw. Controlling asthma requires daily attention. Working with a healthcare provider to create an action plan for managing asthma long-term and handling symptoms, most people with asthma can avoid attacks, have few symptoms, sleep through the night, and be physically active.

If you have asthma, you and your healthcare provider can work *together* on six key actions to make your breathing easier.

- [Use inhaled corticosteroids](#) to control asthma if you have persistent asthma. Your doctor will help you choose the best treatment.
- [Use a written action plan](#) to highlight two things: 1) what to do daily to prevent attacks, and 2) how to handle symptoms or asthma attacks.
- [Assess asthma severity](#) at the initial visit to determine what treatment to start to get your asthma under control.
- [Assess and monitor how well controlled your asthma is](#) at follow-up visits. Your doctor may need to adjust your medicine to keep asthma under control.
- [Schedule follow-up visits](#) at periodic intervals, and at least every six months.
- [Avoid or control environmental exposures](#) such as allergens or irritants that worsen your asthma

These actions are based on guidelines for improving asthma control and care from the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP) that is coordinated by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), a part of the National Institutes of Health.

“Making sure that asthma is under control is not just a daily effort, it’s a *team* effort,” said James P. Kiley, Ph.D., director, NHLBI’s Division of Lung Diseases. “Patients, families, healthcare providers, school personnel, and others need to work *together* to help *all* Americans with asthma live to their fullest.”

This Asthma Awareness Month (May) and beyond, if you, have asthma but have not yet developed an asthma action plan, the NAEPP encourages you to work with your healthcare provider to develop one and discuss how to use it.

And don’t forget the other five actions above: You, your healthcare provider, and your family can work together as a team to control your asthma.

For an asthma action plan and more, visit:

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/prof/lung/asthma/naci/news/world-asthma-day.htm>

*\*Note to editors: World Asthma Day is May 1, 2012, and Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month is May 2012.*