**4 Steps You Can Take to Control Your Asthma**

Did you know that asthma affects 1 in 13 people in the United States (U.S.)? Asthma is a long-term condition that can make it harder for you to breathe because the airways of your lungs become inflamed and narrow. If you have the disease – or think you do – don’t tough it out. While there’s no cure for asthma, it can usually be managed by taking a few key steps that can help you live a full and active life.

Here are some important facts to know first:

Asthma affects some communities more than others. Black people and American Indian/Alaska Native people have the highest asthma rates of any racial or ethnic group, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In fact, Black people are over 40 percent more likely to have asthma than white people.

Asthma rates vary within some communities. For example, Puerto Rican Americans have twice the asthma rate of the overall U.S. Hispanic/Latino population.

Some groups are more likely to have serious consequences from asthma. The CDC found that Black people are almost four times more likelyto be hospitalized because of their asthma than white people.

Almost twice as many women as men have asthma.

Even if you experience asthma differently than others, you can still take action to try to control your symptoms and begin doing the things you love. The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

recommends these four steps:

**Talk to a healthcare provider.**

You can work with a healthcare provider to set up an asthma action plan. This plan explains how to manage your asthma, what medicines to take and when, and what to do if your symptoms get worse. It also tells you what to do in an emergency.

**Know and track your asthma symptoms.**

Are you experiencing symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness, or shortness of breath? Tell a healthcare provider about them, and make sure to keep track of any changes. That way you and the provider can know if your treatment plan is working.

**Identify and manage your triggers.**

Some common asthma triggers include dust, mold, pollen, pests like cockroaches or rodents, and pet hair. The asthma action plan can help you figure out what triggers make your asthma worse and how to manage them.

**Avoid cigarette smoke.**

If you smoke, talk to a healthcare provider about ways to help you quit. If you have loved ones who smoke, ask them to quit. Do your best to avoid smoke in shared indoor spaces, including your home and car.

Asthma doesn’t have to stop you from leading a full and active life. Find out more about asthma and how to manage it from NHLBI’s *Learn More Breathe Better*® program at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/breathebetter](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/BreatheBetter).