**New Guidance May Change How You Control Your Asthma**

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health recently updated national guidelines for the diagnosis, treatment and management of asthma. [Asthma](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/asthma) is a chronic lung condition affecting about 25 million Americans, 5.5 million of whom are children. The *[2020 Focused Updates to the Asthma](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/asthma-management-guidelines-2020-updates)*

*[Management Guidelines](https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health-topics/asthma-management-guidelines-2020-updates)* aim to improve the care of people living with asthma. Together, people with asthma, their caregivers and health care providers can make informed decisions about asthma management based on this new guidance.

The guidelines contain 19 new recommendations in six key areas of asthma diagnosis, management and treatment. For example, they suggest that people ages 4 and up with moderate to severe persistent asthma use a single inhaler that contains an inhaled corticosteroid and the bronchodilator formoterol. The guidance recommends this treatment both as a daily asthma controller and as a quick-relief therapy. **Inhaled corticosteroids** are medicines that help control inflammation in your airways over time, and bronchodilators help keep your airway muscles relaxed. The guidelines also suggest that people ages 12 and up with mild persistent asthma may do well with inhaled corticosteroids along with a type of medication called a short-acting bronchodilator for quick relief.

People who are sensitive and exposed to **indoor** **allergy triggers**, such as dust or animal dander, may find that these allergens affect their asthma. A few different strategies, used together, can help reduce symptoms. Using only one strategy often does not improve asthma outcomes. For example, using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration vacuum cleaner along with pillow and mattress covers that prevent dust mites from going through them could benefit those sensitive to dust. Using an integrated pest management plan may be helpful if you are allergic and exposed to cockroaches, mice or rats.

Talking with your health care provider about these and other updates to the asthma management guidelines is an important part of your asthma care and can help you make informed decisions about your treatment. Asthma is a serious condition, but with the right treatment, it can be controlled. Work with your health care provider to develop a comprehensive prevention and treatment plan that includes:

Taking prescribed medications

Addressing environmental factors that worsen symptoms

Learning skills to manage your asthma on your own (such as with an asthma action plan)

Monitoring your care to assess how well it’s working and how to adjust, if needed

If you have asthma and are concerned about COVID-19, talk to your health care provider. People with moderate to severe asthma may be more likely to get severely ill with COVID-19. COVID-19 can affect the respiratory tract (nose, throat, lungs), cause an asthma attack and possibly lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease. For more information on COVID-19, visit CDC.gov.

Read more about the updated guidelines and find asthma resources and information from NHLBI’s *Learn More Breathe BetterSM* program at [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/LMBBasthma](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/LMBBasthma).