

# Following Your Asthma Action Plan

Your Asthma Action Plan is a daily guide to help you stay in control of your asthma and know what to do if your asthma flares up. You and your healthcare provider will work together to create your asthma action plan.

Not every asthma action plan looks alike, but it should contain 4 key components: When to take or increase your asthma medicine? How to take or increase your asthma treatment? How long? When to call 911 or seek medical help?

Written at the top of your asthma action plan, you should find your healthcare provider's name and phone number, and a list of any known asthma triggers - things that bring about your asthma symptoms - that you should avoid.

Many asthma action plans are color-coded to match how good or bad you are feeling. Medicines and instructions written in the green zone are things you take or do every day, even when you are not feeling sick.

How do you and your doctor know when you are in the green zone?

When you're in the green zone, you feel like your usual self. You should keep taking your controller medications as prescribed, and continue your normal activities.

If your healthcare provider recommends that you self-monitor asthma with a peak flow meter, your peak flow reading should be in the range indicated in the green zone on your asthma action plan. If your readings continue to stay within the green zone your asthma is in great control.

If you're in the yellow zone, take caution. You might notice symptoms such as coughing, mild wheezing, or chest tightness. Your yellow zone may also be triggered by exposure to a known allergen or having a common cold.

If your healthcare provider recommends that you self-monitor asthma with a peak flow meter, if your peak flow reading drops below 80% of your best or predicted peak flow, you might be entering the yellow zone.

If you think you are in the yellow zone, take the medicines and follow the instructions in the yellow zone on your asthma action plan for as long as your doctor has recommended.

How do you know you are in the red zone? If you have taken all the medicines and followed all the instructions from your doctor, listed in the yellow zone of your asthma action plan BUT you still cannot breathe normally, you are in the red zone.

If you are in the red zone, it is dangerous, and you need to get help quickly. This can be life threatening. If you are in the presence of an asthma trigger, leave the area immediately.

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Then call 911 or have a family member or friend transport you immediately to the nearest urgent care center or emergency room. You can take additional doses of your rescue inhaler until medical help arrives.

It's very important that you understand your asthma action plan and follow it carefully. If you have any questions about your asthma action plan make an appointment to review these questions with your healthcare provider. And be sure to take your plan with you to your appointment.

Your asthma action plan may change every so often, depending on your response to your medications, the changing seasons, your overall asthma control, or other factors.

Asthma can't be cured, but it can be controlled. And following your asthma action plan is the best way to begin.