

Asthma Management: Controller Medications

When you have asthma your healthcare provider may prescribe a controller medication to help reduce your asthma symptoms.

Controller medications work differently than Rescue medications.

Controller medications work to help control or prevent symptoms, while Rescue medications relieve symptoms during a flare-up.

Controller medications are also called long-term, maintenance or preventer medications.

These medications are taken every day to control or prevent symptoms, even when you are feeling fine. Controller medications reduce the need for rescue medications.

“A daily controller inhaler is typically used once or twice every day, and it’s typically an anti-inflammatory medicine that goes straight into your lungs, reducing the airway inflammation and swelling that’s present in asthma. So when you reduce the swelling that’s present, your lungs feel more open and you breathe better.”

If you find you need to use a rescue medication more than two times per week, you should call your healthcare provider.

This is a sign that your controller medication is not working properly for you. Your overall medication plan may need to be adjusted.

It’s worth repeating. You need to use your controller medications every day, even when you are feeling well.

If you don’t take them regularly, they can’t do their job. Also, make sure that you stick to the prescribed dose.

“So when you have persistent asthma and you’ve been prescribed a daily controller medicine, it’s really essential for you to use it every day. That’s how the medicine works best. That’s how you’re going to prevent symptoms, and that’s how you’re going to treat yourself to feel better. Also, by being on a daily controller medicine, you protect yourself. You protect your lungs from triggers, whether it be allergies, weather, exercise. So it’s really important to use it every day because that’s really how it works best.”

If you feel your symptoms aren’t being controlled by your medication, talk to your healthcare provider. There may be a different dosage or medication more appropriate for your care.