

WINTER FOCUS ON ASTHMA

Winter means cold and flu season is here! If you have asthma, you have a higher risk of having problems if you get the flu. Don't take that chance. Get a flu shot every fall season. Talk with your healthcare provider about whether you should also get a pneumonia shot.

Take an Active Role in Asthma Care

Work with your provider to learn what to do to prevent and manage asthma symptoms. Here are some tips to help you take better care of yourself:

- Take your daily preventive asthma medicine every day as directed by your provider
- Talk with your provider if you use your rescue inhaler more than 2 days in a week
- Bring a list of questions with you to your office visits. Ask questions about anything you do not understand
- Tell your provider about your asthma symptoms. Be specific about what your symptoms are and when they happen
- Listen closely to what your provider says. Bring paper and a pen to write down information to help you remember
- Tell your provider you would like to schedule "asthma only" office visits—to help you focus on your asthma care. Keep your appointments
- Remember to wash your hands often to help avoid getting a cold

Everyone Needs an Asthma Action Plan

Make an asthma action plan with your provider to help you manage your asthma symptoms. Your plan will tell you:

- What medicines to take
- How much to take
- When to take them
- When to get help

Asthma symptoms can change from day to day or month to month. You can feel fine one minute and have trouble breathing the next. To help yourself, use your asthma action plan every day and focus on these goals:

- Have few or no asthma symptoms during the day and night
- Have few or no visits to the emergency room or hospital
- Maintain good lung function
- Do your normal activities without limits
- Use your rescue inhaler no more than 2 days in a week
- Have little or no bad effects from your medicines

Other goals for you:

Take an active role in your asthma care. Work with your healthcare provider to help prevent and manage your asthma symptoms.