

Effective asthma management

The goal of your asthma management plan is to effectively control the condition so that you can be symptom free.

Good control (symptom-free)

No daytime or night time symptoms

Reliever medication fewer (blue inhaler) than four times per week

Not absent from school or work because of asthma

Peak flow readings are on target

Able to participate in normal activities, even strenuous physical activities, without symptoms

Moderate control (some symptoms)

You experience asthma symptoms during normal activities and physical activity

Your sleep may be disturbed by symptoms

You are using your reliever medication (blue inhaler) more than four times per week

You have been absent from school or work because of asthma

A cold or other chest infection has caused symptoms to flare up

Poor control (you need help)

The severe symptoms described earlier signal that you need immediate medical attention. Be sure that you have the phone numbers handy for your doctor, local emergency service and local ambulance service.



For more information

The pharmacist affiliated with Accès pharma chez Walmart is knowledgeable about asthma and the safe, effective management of the condition. Talk to him about any questions you may have about managing your condition.

There are a number of information sources that may be helpful:

Asthme-Québec

www.asthme-quebec.ca/eng/index.html

The Lung Association

www.pq.lung.ca

The Asthma Society of Canada

www.asthma.ca

Allergy Asthma Information Association

www.aaia.ca

This information should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your doctor. There may be variations in treatment that your physician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances. If you have questions about your symptoms, ask the pharmacist affiliated with Accès pharma chez Walmart for more information, and/or contact your doctor.

Only pharmacists are responsible for pharmacy practice. They only provide related services acting under a pharmacist owner's name and use different tools including Health Access tools.

HEALTH ACCESS

ASTHMA

Asthma is a condition that affects approximately 12% of children and 8% of adults in Canada. It is defined as a chronic inflammation (redness, irritation and swelling) of the airways in the lungs.

While the exact cause of asthma is not known, a family history of asthma, sensitivity and exposure to allergens and other trigger can contribute to asthma. You cannot change your family history, but you can try to reduce your exposure to allergens and triggers. Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be effectively controlled in most people. The more you know and understand about asthma, the better you will be able to control and manage the condition.

The pharmacist affiliated with Accès pharma chez Walmart and your doctor can help you achieve this goal.

Asthma symptoms

The most common asthma symptoms are:

Shortness of breath

Tightness of the chest

Coughing

Wheezing

These symptoms can be mild, moderate or severe. Symptoms vary from person to person and may vary from episode to episode. They may go away and then come back after long periods of time.

Some people experience symptoms only when exercising or exposed to cold air. Others may experience asthma symptoms resulting from seasonal allergies (e.g., hay fever in the spring and/or fall).

If you experience severe asthma symptoms, you must get medical attention right away. Severe symptoms include:

Excessive coughing

Excessive wheezing

Extreme tightness in your chest

Extreme difficulty breathing

Sweating

Pale or blue lips, fingernails

Anxiety, fear

Reliever medication is not relieving symptoms

Asthma and allergies

Asthma and allergies are related, and allergens may cause asthma symptoms. Almost 75% of people with asthma also have seasonal allergies (e.g., hay fever). Seasonal allergies may make asthma symptoms worse, so it is important to treat your seasonal allergies to help prevent asthma symptoms from worsening.

Asthma triggers

There are several different types of asthma triggers.

Asthma triggers

These can cause swelling of the lung airways or tighten the airway muscles. These triggers include:

Dust mites

Animals, animal dander

Cockroaches

Mold

Pollen

Seasonal allergies (e.g., ragweed, grasses, trees)

Some viral infections (e.g., common cold)

Non-allergic triggers

These do not cause swelling. These triggers include:

Smoke (both from wood-burning fires and tobacco – first-and second-hand smoke)

Exercise

Cold air

Fumes from chemicals or strong perfumes

Air pollution

Intense emotion

Preventing and managing asthma symptoms

While there is no cure for asthma, it can be effectively managed and controlled. Being confident about your understanding of the condition and how to manage it may help you keep it under control. Some management basics include:

Avoiding and/or controlling your personal triggers

Taking the right medications at the right time and in the right way

Peak flow meters and digital asthma monitors can help you monitor and manage your asthma, as well. The readings from these devices will tell you how well the air is moving through your airways