

Wellness Newsletter

A Newsletter for MoDOT and MSHP



Breathe easier

Spring is here! If you're among the millions of people who suffer from seasonal allergies, you'll be greeting it with an itchy nose and watery eyes. For those who also suffer from asthma, seasonal allergies can affect the airways in the lungs with symptoms ranging from mild to serious or even life threatening. The good news is that it can be controlled and you can find relief from your symptoms and breathe easier. **May is Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month.** Take steps this month to work with your doctor to create an action plan to keep your asthma and allergies under control.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/actionplan.html>, http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/impacts_nation/AsthmaFactSheet.pdf American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology, <http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/allergies.aspx>

Take action with asthma and allergies

Uncover your triggers. Pollen, dust, mold, pets, smoke, grass, weather changes, exercise and infections are common triggers.

Know your symptoms. If you experience or notice a persistent cough, wheezing, chest tightness and/or shortness of breath, you should talk to your doctor.

Develop an action plan. An action plan is developed by you and your doctor.

This plan tells you which medicines you should take and when they are appropriate to manage your symptoms. The plan also outlines steps to take when your symptoms get worse you need to seek medical care.

Take your medications. Make sure you are taking your medications as prescribed by your doctor.

Sources: Coventry CareTips: Asthma, <http://chmissouri.coventryhealthcare.com/wellness-resources/managing-medical-conditions/index.htm>; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/actionplan.html>



Did you know?

Asthma:

- Emotional stress can make asthma worse. Take time to learn effective coping strategies and avoid stressful situations, especially when your asthma is out of control.
- You can still exercise and control your asthma. Be sure to warm up before exercising and take rest periods if you begin to notice symptoms. Talk to your doctor before you start any new exercise program.

Allergies:

- According to the leading allergy experts, an allergic reaction begins in the immune system. Our immune system protects us from invading organisms that can cause an illness.
- Spring is in the air, and so are billions of tiny pollens that trigger allergy symptoms in millions of people. Seasonal allergic rhinitis is commonly referred to as hay fever. It can lead to sinus infections, disrupt your sleep and affect your ability to learn at school or be productive at work.

Sources: Coventry CareTips: Asthma, <http://chcmisouri.coventryhealthcare.com/wellness-resources/managing-medical-conditions/index.htm>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/actionplan.html>; http://chcmisouri.coventryhealthcare.com/web/groups/public/@cvty_regional_chcma/documents/document/c077273.pdf

Asthma action plan

Asthma is treated with two kinds of medicines: quick relief medicines to stop asthma symptoms and long-term control medicines to prevent symptoms. It is important to take your long-term control medicine even when you feel well. Many people with asthma need to monitor their condition with a peak flow meter. This is a device that measures how well your lungs are working.



The colors of a traffic light can help you use your asthma medicines.

Green means Go Zone. Your breathing is good, no cough or wheeze and you can work or play. Use preventive medicine.

Yellow means Caution Zone. Add quick-relief medicine.

Red means Danger Zone. Get help from a doctor.

Source: http://chcmisouri.coventryhealthcare.com/web/groups/public/@cvty_regional_chcma/documents/document/c077272.pdf

Tools and resources

Staying informed about medical conditions and current treatments is another way you can stay healthy. Login to **My Online Services**SM for a library of medical conditions, symptoms, causes and common treatments.

To get started:

- Visit the website on your member ID card.
- Log in to or register for My Online Services.
- Select “Health Information Library/Interactive Tools” under “Wellness Tools.”
- Select “Learning Centers” and select “asthma” and/or “allergies” to learn more.



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