

## Asthma Medications

Doctors usually prescribe medications to help treat asthma. Medications used for asthma treatment include those that control the asthma and those used to provide quick relief during an asthma attack.

If your doctor prescribes medications, it is important that you use them as directed. Do not stop taking them unless told to do so by your doctor. Otherwise a dangerous asthma attack could occur.

Each person has different medication needs. That's why it is important to discuss your medications with your doctor.

## Our program

Healthy Options asthma management, a BCBSKS program, emphasizes educating members about their health conditions and working with them to take a more active role in their health care. With the help of a registered nurse, enrolled members will receive education to promote:

- Improved understanding of their asthma
- Encouragement of healthy lifestyle options
- Improved health care team relationships
- Empowerment to make informed health decisions

With these changes, members will have a good foundation to start on the road to good health.

A registered nurse will work with members by phone to provide information on various topics. Clinical information provided by the member is used to assess areas of educational needs as well as the member's ongoing health status. In addition, members may receive periodic mailings on various asthma-related topics.

This **free** program is designed to help members, ages 21 to 63, who have BCBSKS as his or her primary carrier. Participation in the program is voluntary and the member may elect to withdraw at any time. Any information gathered during the course of the program will remain strictly confidential. Participation in Healthy Options will in no way affect the benefits of the member's contract.

## Call Today!

For further information about the program contact us at:

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# Asthma Management

Helping our members take charge of their asthma



# asthma triggers

Our Healthy Options asthma management program is designed to assist members in the effective management of asthma.

## Asthma Facts

- Asthma affects as many as 20 million people in the U.S.
- Asthma costs the American economy an estimated \$19.7 billion annually. Direct care costs account for \$14.7 billion; indirect costs, such as lost productivity, account for \$5 billion.

## What is Asthma?

Asthma is a chronic lung disease which causes the lungs' air passages to become inflamed and swollen making breathing difficult. During an asthma attack a person may feel tightness in their chest, become short of breath, start to wheeze and cough, or experience restlessness during sleep resulting in daytime fatigue.

Asthma can affect an individual's activities of daily life, but it does not have to. Through the Healthy Options asthma management program an individual can learn how to take better care of their asthma and live a healthy, active lifestyle.

## Common Asthma Triggers

Reduce exposure to as many asthma triggers as possible.

### Infections:

- Common cold
- Influenza
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)

### Drugs:

- Aspirin
- Ibuprofen
- Beta blockers

### Occupational Dusts and Vapors:

- Plastics
- Metals
- Grains
- Wood

### Cold Air

### Air Pollution:

- Cigarette smoke
- Ozone
- Sulfur dioxide
- Auto exhaust

## Vigorous Exercise

### Household Products:

- Paints
- Cleaners
- Sprays
- Scented products

## Emotional Stress and Excitement

### Allergic Reactions:

- Pollens
- Feathers
- Animals
- Molds
- Some foods
- House dust

## Peak Flow Meters Are Important in the Management of Asthma

A peak flow meter is a device that measures how fast air is moved from the lungs.

The color coded zones on a peak flow meter are similar to the signals on a traffic light representing safety, caution and danger, which is an indication of whether an individual's asthma is under control.

A health care professional can assist in determining personal best readings. If you are not using a peak flow meter, talk to your provider.

## Important Asthma Reminders

- Take asthma seriously.
- Take asthma medicines as prescribed.
- Avoid triggers that make your asthma worse.
- Measure the peak flow rate.
- Monitor your asthma zones.
- Follow an asthma action plan.
- When asthma symptoms don't stop, contact your doctor.

# what is asthma?