

Asthma: You & Your Doctor

- [The Doctor's Role in Asthma Care](#)
- [Your Role In Asthma Care](#)

THE DOCTOR'S ROLE IN ASTHMA CARE

The doctor's role in asthma care begins with your diagnosis. Once a doctor decides that you have asthma, then you and the doctor can work together to control it.

During the diagnosis, a doctor will take your medical history, give you a physical checkup and do some lab tests. These tests may include a chest x-ray, blood and allergy tests, and lung-function tests. These tests may include a chest x-ray, blood and allergy tests, and lung function tests, such as [spirometry](#). In spirometry, you blow into a device called a spirometer, which measures the air you breathe in and out of your lungs.

Once the doctor decides that you do, indeed, have asthma, then medical treatment can start. This means that the doctor chooses the best asthma medicines at the right doses for you.

The doctor, too, may recommend that you start using a peak flow meter at home. Ask your doctor about this.

In peak flow monitoring, you blow into a device, called a peak flow meter, which measures the greatest amount of air that you can exhale. Peak flow meters are easy to use by yourself every day. These devices can help you to know if your breathing problems are starting even when you don't feel any asthma symptoms. That way, you know when to take your asthma medicine before your symptoms get worse.

After you start taking your asthma medicines, you need to see *a doctor on a regular basis, not just when you're having problems*. That way the doctor can make certain your medicines are working well.

The doctor needs to know if:

- You have breathing problems at night and you do not get a good night's sleep.
- Your asthma makes it hard for you to do things during the day.
- You take more medicine than the doctor has prescribed. This is a danger sign! It means that something is not working right with your treatment.

There is no need for you to suffer. Once you talk with a doctor, you may find that a change in your asthma medicines

is all that is needed to help you feel better.

So talk regularly to a doctor about your asthma. There are many things that can start asthma and asthma can change, sometimes getting better or worse.

You may find that your medicines need to be changed. Or, new medicines may be available that will work even better for you.

YOUR ROLE IN ASTHMA CARE

There are three things that you need to do to control your asthma:

- **FIRST:** See a doctor or other primary care health provider regularly about your asthma. This is important because your symptoms can change over time. Your triggers can change, too. You may need different medicines to help keep you healthy. So regular contact with a doctor or other primary care health provider is an important part of controlling your asthma.
- **SECOND:** Take your asthma medicines as the doctor has prescribed, *even when you feel well*. That way, you keep breathing problems from happening.
- **THIRD:** Get educated about asthma. Find out what triggers it and what you must do to stay healthy. In fact, everyone in your family should know about asthma and know what to do when you need help.

Start taking control of asthma:

- Learn your triggers and symptoms and what to do about them.
- Learn what to do for asthma attacks.
- Learn about your medicines so you know how quickly they should work.