



Living Well



with

Asthma

Asthma Self Care Pack



Name

(please state the name you prefer to be known as)

Date of Birth

NHS Number

Emergency Contact/
Carer's Details

If found, please return this pack to:

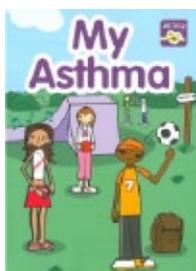
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We have tried to include as much information as possible in the pack. Wherever you see a website or email address there is a hyperlink to that page. If you are viewing this pack on a computer you can click on these links to view that web page.

As everyone's situation is different, you may find that there is information in this pack that doesn't apply to you. You may also want to use this pack to make notes, store appointments, and add letters, leaflets and anything else you may find useful.



The pack is intended for adults who have asthma.

Asthma UK produce very useful publications called 'My Asthma' that children with asthma can use and 'Asthma and My Child' that provides information about asthma in children.

What is

... and what does it mean for me?

Looking after yourself in a healthy way, whether it's brushing your teeth, taking medicine when you have a cold, or doing some exercise, is really important to help to keep yourself as well as possible.

If you have a long-term condition, there are extra things you may need to consider, such as making changes to your diet, different types of exercise or different types of medication you may need to take.

It is important to stay active and do things that are important to you, such as gardening, seeing friends and family, going on holiday, or continuing to work where possible. Self care involves looking at what you can do and want to do, rather than what you can't do.

Living a healthy lifestyle is an important part of self care for everyone. You can take responsibility for your own health and wellbeing, with support from the people involved in your care.

When you talk to your doctor or nurse about your condition, you may want to discuss some of the things you need to do to stay well. Some of these will be things that you do yourself, such as eating healthily, exercising, or taking your medicines at the right time.

NHS Choices

There's lots of useful information about keeping well and healthy living. Look out for the Live Well section of the NHS Choices website. If you're living with a long-term condition, Your health, your way has advice on self care and taking control of your health.



www.nhs.uk

What is Asthma?

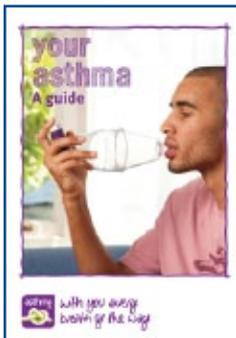
Asthma is caused by inflammation of the airways. These are the small tubes, called bronchi, which carry air in and out of the lungs. If you have asthma, the bronchi will be inflamed and more sensitive than normal.

When you come into contact with something that irritates your lungs, known as a trigger, your airways become narrow, the muscles around them tighten and there is an increase in the production of sticky mucus (phlegm).



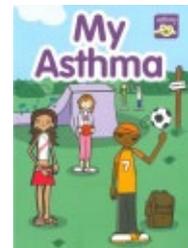
This leads to symptoms including:

- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing and coughing
- A tight chest



For detailed information about asthma, its causes and how you can keep it under control, visit Asthma UK's website.

They produce a number of publications including a very useful publication called 'My Asthma' that children with asthma can use. Contact Asthma UK to order your copy.



www.asthma.org.uk



Asthma UK Helpline 0800 121 6244

There are also some fantastic information guides available on the British Lung Foundation website:



www.blf.org.uk

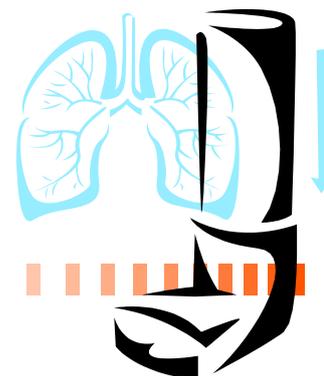
What causes Asthma?

The cause of asthma is not fully understood, although it is known to run in families.

You are more likely to have asthma if one or both of your parents has the condition.

Things known to increase the likelihood of developing asthma include:

- A family history of asthma or other related allergic conditions (known as atopic conditions), such as eczema, food allergy or hay fever
- Developing another atopic condition, such as a food allergy
- Having bronchiolitis as a child (a common lung infection among children)
- Being exposed to tobacco smoke as a child, particularly if your mother smoked during pregnancy
- Being born prematurely (especially if you needed a ventilator)
- A low birth weight (less than 2kg or 4.5lb)



For detailed information about asthma, its causes and how you can keep it under control, visit Asthma UK's website:



www.asthma.org.uk



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Living with Asthma

Your asthma may get better or worse at different times. There may be periods when you have asthma symptoms, but in between you may be generally well, even for many years. Here are some things you can do to help keep your asthma under control.

Self Care

Self care is an integral part of daily life. It involves taking responsibility for your own health and wellbeing with support from those involved in your care. Self care includes what you do every day to stay fit and maintain good physical and mental health, prevent illness or accidents and care more effectively for minor ailments and long-term conditions. People living with long-term conditions can benefit enormously from being supported to self care. You can live longer, experience less pain, anxiety, depression and fatigue, have a better quality of life and be more active and independent.

Look after your asthma

Working in partnership with your doctor or asthma nurse is important, so that you have a good understanding of your condition, and how to look after it. Make sure you know what your medicines are, what they are for, and how to use your inhalers correctly. Having a written personal action plan (see below) is one of the most important things you can do to manage your asthma. Visit your doctor or nurse at least once a year, even if you are well, to review your medicines.



Have a written personal action plan

The plan will contain information about how to manage your symptoms, your asthma medicines, how to tell when your symptoms are getting worse and what you should do about it. Your doctor or nurse should help you to complete it.

You can download a copy of Asthma UK's 'Your asthma action plan' here:



www.asthma.org.uk/advice-just-diagnosed-manage-your-asthma-better

Take your medication

It is important to take your medication as prescribed, even if you start to feel better. Taking your preventer medication every day will help keep your asthma under control and can help prevent asthma attacks. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to check your inhaler technique, to make sure you're taking your medicines properly. If you have any questions or concerns about medication you're taking or side effects, talk to your doctor or nurse.

Regular reviews



Because asthma is a long-term condition, you'll be in contact with your doctor or asthma nurse regularly. You should see them at least once a year, or more regularly if you have just been diagnosed or if you've been unwell with your asthma. A good relationship with your doctor/nurse means you can easily discuss your symptoms, or concerns.

You can find out more information about what you can expect from your asthma review here:



www.asthma.org.uk/advice-manage-your-asthma-bettermaking-the-most-of-your-asthma-review

Check your peak flow



By keeping a peak flow diary you can keep track of your symptoms and notice if your asthma is changing.

You can get a free peak flow diary from Asthma UK:



www.asthma.org.uk/advice-manage-your-asthma-better-peak-flow-diary

Watch what you breathe

To reduce symptoms of Asthma and chances of a flare-up, there are certain things that should be avoided if possible, including:

- Dusty places
- Fumes, such as car exhausts
- Smoke
- Air freshener sprays or plug-ins
- Strong-smelling cleaning products, unless there is plenty of ventilation
- Hairspray
- Perfume

Get your jabs

If you take inhaled or oral steroids to manage your asthma, you need flu and pneumonia vaccinations to reduce your chances of a serious respiratory illness. The flu and pneumonia jabs are available free from your doctor.

The flu jab is given every year from October. The pneumonia jab is a one-off jab that protects against certain types of pneumonia, septicaemia (blood poisoning) and meningitis. You can have both jabs at the same time.

The shingles vaccine is currently given to those aged 70 and 79 years old.

Check your painkillers

If you have asthma and you take aspirin or other painkillers, there's a very small chance that you'll have a bad reaction to the medication. Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) such as brufen, voltarol and naposyn (for example, Ibuprofen and Naproxin) have been shown to cause asthma attacks in about one in 10 adults with asthma. Reactions are much less common in children. If you think you have had or are having an allergic reaction or increased asthma symptoms after taking aspirin or any other NSAID, you should avoid all these types of medicines. Your doctor or pharmacist will be able to advise you about alternative painkillers. If you have taken NSAIDs since being diagnosed with asthma and have not had an adverse reaction, they are probably safe for you. However, it is important to remember that people with asthma sometimes find that their asthma triggers can change, so watch out for worsening symptoms if you take these medicines. Remember that some cold and flu remedies may also contain NSAIDs. If this happens, stop taking the aspirin and seek advice from your doctor.

Take care in cold weather



Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms, such as wheezing and shortness of breath. Be especially careful in winter. Be cautious going out on very cold, windy days. If you go out, wear a scarf over your nose and mouth. Be extra careful about taking your regular medications. Keep rescue inhalers close by and in a warm place.

Eat healthily and exercise

Eating a healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and few additives may help with asthma in the long term. A diet that includes a high level of nutrients can also boost the immune system and help ward off colds and flu - both of which are common asthma triggers.

It also helps if you stay trim. Losing weight can help in managing asthma, and combined with a more active lifestyle, can also help to improve lung function.

For more information on exercising when you have asthma read the 'Keeping Active' section of this pack.



Try to avoid cigarette smoke

Cigarette smoke is particularly bad for people with asthma. Quitting smoking is one of the best things you can do for your asthma. If you don't smoke, it's still important to try to avoid smoky places, even second hand smoke can cause asthma symptoms.'

Support with stopping smoking

Quitting smoking is one of the best things that you can do for your asthma. This will significantly reduce the severity and frequency of your symptoms. Smoking can also reduce the effectiveness of asthma medication.

Research has shown you are up to four times more likely to quit smoking if you use the support of your local Stop Smoking service in addition to products such as patches or gum. You can find support and order a 'quit kit' to help you stop smoking at:

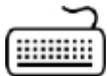


www.nhs.uk/smokefree

You can contact your local Stop Smoking service for support, advice and details of local support groups:



01274 437700



stopsmokingservice@bradford.gov.uk

Hayfever/allergies and asthma

Hay fever and allergies can trigger your asthma symptoms and increase your risk of an asthma attack, so if you have hay fever or allergies it's really important that you talk to your doctor about the best way to manage them.

If you have hayfever make sure you have your medicines reviewed about a month before it starts. For more information on asthma triggers and how to manage them please visit:

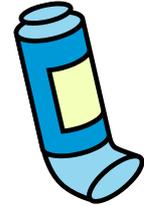


www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-triggers-a-z



Asthma UK's Helpline 0800 121 6244

Know what steps to take in an asthma attack



You can find out your risk of having an attack by taking Asthma UK's 'Triple A' test at:



www.asthma.org.uk/advice-the-triple-a-test

Asthma attacks don't usually come out of the blue, but are the result of gradually worsening symptoms. If your asthma symptoms are getting worse, don't ignore them. Sometimes, no matter how careful you are in taking your medicines and avoiding triggers, you may have an attack. You can order a free, pocket-sized 'What to do in an asthma attack' card to carry with you.



www.asthma.org.uk/Shop/asthma-attack-card

Is it an asthma attack?

You can tell you're having an asthma attack if:

- Your reliever inhaler isn't helping
- You have to keep using your reliever inhaler as the effect wears off quickly
- Your symptoms are getting worse
- You're too breathless to speak, eat or sleep

Often, using your reliever inhaler will be enough to relieve your symptoms when you start having an attack.

Sometimes, symptoms are more severe and urgent action is needed.

What to do

Asthma UK advises you to:

- Take one to two puffs of your reliever inhaler (usually blue), immediately.
- Sit down and try to take slow, steady breaths.
- If you do not start to feel better, take two puffs of your reliever inhaler (one puff at a time) every two minutes. You can take up to ten puffs.
- If you do not feel better after taking your inhaler as above, or if you are worried at any time, call 999.
- If an ambulance does not arrive within 10 minutes and you are still feeling unwell, repeat step three.

If your symptoms improve and you do not need to call 999, you still need to see a doctor or asthma nurse within 24 hours.

Keeping Active

Get regular exercise

Although exercise can be a trigger for some people, it's really important to do as much as you can. Exercise can help your asthma, by improving your lung function and stamina. If exercise triggers your asthma it might help if you take your reliever inhaler 20 minutes beforehand.



Walking, swimming (chlorine can be a trigger for some people) and cycling are all activities you can do if you have asthma. A lot of top sportsmen and women have asthma. Some people find that interval based exercise rather than continuous is more manageable, eg running/ walking, playing team sports where you can rest. There are some famous sportsmen and women who have asthma, including Bradley Wiggins CBE and one in four members of the GB Olympic team - so don't let asthma hold you back!

- Champions Show The Way offer walks throughout the Bradford area



Champions Show The Way 01274 321911



www.walkingforhealth.org.uk

- If you find that exercise gives you troublesome asthma symptoms, discuss this with your doctor, as it means that your asthma is not as well controlled as it could be. You may need more preventive asthma treatments

For more information visit the Asthma UK website:



www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-bank-living-with-asthmaexercise

Travel

Being diagnosed with asthma should not prevent you from travelling or going on holiday, as long as you feel well enough and your condition is well controlled.

Planning ahead is key to having a great time away and dealing with any potential problems with your asthma. Health experts advise preparing for a trip four to six weeks before you travel.



If your asthma is severe you may want to check with your doctor beforehand. It may help to jot down a few notes and go through any of the following at your next appointment.

Things you may need to consider:

- Do you need a doctor's letter to say you are fit to travel?
- Do you need to take extra medication with you? Bring enough medicine to last throughout your trip plus a few extra days
- It may be advisable to take two sets of medication with you when you travel. Carry them in different places in case you lose one. Spare inhalers can usually be carried in your hand luggage
- Take a print-out of your regular prescriptions, including the generic names of medicines and what they are for, in case you need medical assistance during your trip or your medication is lost
- Having asthma should not stop you from getting **travel insurance**, but you will need to declare it as an existing condition for your insurance to be valid
- Be aware of your **asthma triggers** and how these may be affected by a different environment
- Do you need any **immunisations**?
- Do you know who to contact in case of an emergency? Find out how you can get medical help (such as a local ambulance or doctor) if necessary at your destination

There is lots of information about travel here:



www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-bank-living-with-asthma-travel

Health checks

Things you might want to consider:

- Seeing your doctor or asthma nurse before you travel to review your personal asthma action plan and to make sure it's up to date
- Creating a personal action plan. This will allow you to recognise deteriorating asthma and alter your treatment to stay well

Asthma triggers

- If being exposed to feather pillows makes your asthma worse, you could bring your own non-feather alternative, or ask your hotel for a pillow with synthetic filling
- If you're sensitive to tobacco smoke, ask your accommodation provider whether you should book a non-smoking room, as smoking rules vary from country to country (for example, smoking is permitted in some restaurants abroad)
- Some holiday activities, such as scuba diving, may be hazardous to people with asthma, and special considerations may apply. Always check as it is better to be safe than sorry
- Ensure your asthma is fully controlled as exposure to allergens and viral infections in confined spaces, such as planes and ships, may make your condition worse



Air travel



- If you're always short of breath, even when resting, you may need a special evaluation before you fly because of the reduced oxygen levels at high altitude
- Carry all your asthma medicines as hand luggage, in case your checked-in luggage goes missing or your medicines are damaged in the baggage hold. Under current security restrictions, you cannot carry containers with liquids, gels or creams that exceed 100ml in your hand luggage
- You can carry essential medicines of more than 100ml on board, but you'll need prior approval from the airline and airport and a letter from your doctor or a prescription
- All asthma medicines taken on board should be in their original packaging, with the prescription label and contact details of the pharmacy clearly visible

Travel immunisations

- Your doctor or practice nurse can tell you what vaccinations and precautions you need to take for the country you're travelling to
- You can have the usual travel jabs that are recommended for your destination, unless there are other health reasons for not having them
- Tell your doctor or practice nurse if you have recently used high-dose oral steroids before you have any vaccinations
- Asthma and its treatment doesn't usually interfere with malaria tablets
- Make sure you check with your doctor or healthcare team about anything you are unsure of

Travel insurance

- Take out travel insurance and check that it will cover your asthma. Many insurers ask you to get permission from your doctor before you travel. Travel insurance quotes vary depending on your age, medication and destination, so shop around for the best deal
- For travel in Europe, make sure you have a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). This entitles you to reduced-cost and sometimes free medical treatment. Take out travel insurance as well because an EHIC may not cover all the costs of your treatment (for example an EHIC doesn't cover the cost of being flown back to the UK)



For more information on the EHIC, and to apply online, visit:



www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcareabroad/EHIC/Pages/about-the-ehic

- See your doctor or asthma nurse before you travel to review your personal asthma action plan and to make sure it's up to date
- Asthma UK list some specialist travel insurance companies who cover medical conditions



www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-bank-living-with-asthma-travel-insurance-for-people-with-asthma



Asthma UK

0800 121 6244

Appointments

It is important to pay attention to any changes in your health, and to stay up to date with your health checks.

Filling in this page and sharing it with people who support you can help.



	Date of last check up	Appointments	Notes
General Health Check			
Flu Jab			
Asthma Nurse			
Other Checks			

It is important to let your health or social care provider know you have asthma so that they can offer any extra support you may need.

Planning For The Future

Work

If you are not well enough to carry out your usual work it is important to talk to your employer as soon as possible, so that you can find a solution that suits both of you. For example, it may be possible for you to work part-time.

- The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to working practices or premises to help a person with a disability. This might include changing or modifying tasks, altering work patterns, installing special equipment, allowing time off to attend appointments or helping with travel to work



Disability Advice Bradford

01274 609895



www.bradforddisabilityservices.co.uk



**Bradford & Airedale
Citizens Advice Bureau**

0844 245 1282



www.citizensadvice.org.uk



Department of Work & Pensions

0845 60 60 265

- If you are not well enough to work, check whether there are benefits that you or your family may be entitled to before you finish. If necessary, your personnel department or manager should be able to help you make enquiries
- The Asthma UK website has useful information covering all aspects of working and asthma, jobs, managing the condition and occupational asthma:



www.asthma.org.uk/knowledge-bank-living-with-asthma-asthma-at-work

Benefit Checks

Many people don't claim the benefits they are entitled to.

Asthma is classed as a disability if it has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal daily activities. This impairment must:



- Have lasted for 12 months
- Be likely to last 12 months
- Be of a recurring nature where a recurrence is likely in a 12-month period

If you or your child has care or mobility needs because of asthma, you may be entitled to benefits.

You are entitled to a benefits check to ensure you are receiving the right amount. The organisations listed below can help you with this:



Disability Advice Bradford

01274 609895



**Bradford & Airedale
Citizens Advice Bureau**

0844 245 1282



Department of Work & Pensions

0845 60 60 265



British Lung Foundation

03000 030 555

Where To Find Support

Services

Look at what services may be available to you. Even if you don't need them now, they may be useful in the future.

- Find out what services can be arranged through your doctor or consultant
- Find out what kinds of services and support are provided by organisations, such as Asthma UK. Your local Citizens Advice Bureau, or Social Services can advise about this
- Connect to Support Bradford is a website to help people seeking social care or support in the Bradford District, with everything you need to help you with your support, from local to national products and services, information, advice and more



www.connecttosupport.org/bradford



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'Connect to Support Bradford District' website. At the top left is the logo 'Connect to Support Bradford District'. To the right, the heading reads 'Welcome to Connect to Support Bradford District'. Below this, a paragraph states: 'Connect to Support is a new website for people needing care or support in Bradford District. You can find everything you need to help you with your support here, from local to national products and services, plus information and advice and much more.' Below the text are three buttons: 'Providers, sign up now Register today', 'View the Introductory Video', and 'Tell us what you think about the site'. At the bottom, there are three main navigation boxes: 'Search and Shop' with a shopping basket icon, 'Local groups and activities Find local groups or activities in your area' with an icon of three people, and 'Information and advice' with a signpost icon pointing to 'Advice', 'Assistance', 'Guidance', and 'Support'.

- Contact your local social services department for details of services that they can arrange. Find out about getting a community care assessment to assess your needs. Social Services departments are listed in the phone book under the name of the local authority

Useful Contacts

Name	Contact Number	Details
Emergency Services	999	To call in case of fire, medical emergency or if you urgently need the Police.
111	111	NHS 111 is a fast and easy way to get the right help, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.
Asthma UK	0800 121 6244 www.asthma.org.uk	The UK's leading asthma charity have some fantastic resources and a very comprehensive website covering all aspects of living well with asthma.
British Lung Foundation	03000 030 555 www.blf.org.uk helpline@blf.org.uk	Advice and support for people affected by lung conditions, plus a comprehensive range of publications on their website.
Stop Smoking Service	01274 437700 www.nhs.uk/smokefree	Support and advice on stopping smoking as well as details of local groups and services.
Health Trainers	01274 777527	Health Trainers can support you to make lifestyle changes and improve your health.
Carers' Resource	01274 449660 01756 700888 www.carersresource.org	The Carers' Resource provides support for carers, no matter what their age, race, religion or needs.

Useful Contacts

Name	Contact Number	Details
Champions Show The Way	<p>01274 321911</p> <p>champions@bdct.nhs.uk</p>	<p>CSTW supports people's Health and Wellbeing by providing social activities and walking groups which are run by Volunteer Community Health Champions. These free activities are aimed at anyone who has a long term health condition/has recently been discharged from hospital or is over 50.</p>
Carers' Connection	<p>01274 323323</p>	<p>Carers' Connection offer an advice and support service to carers on any matter of interest to them, such as: Health and social care, Residential care, Holidays, Equipment, Leisure and wellbeing.</p>
Connect to Support Bradford District	<p>www.connecttosupport.org/ bradford</p>	<p>A website to help people seeking social care or support in the Bradford District. Everything you need to help you with your support, from local to national products and services, information, advice and more.</p>

Notes

A series of horizontal dotted lines for writing notes.



Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven
Bradford Districts
Bradford City

CCGs working together



City of Bradford MDC

www.bradford.gov.uk

Produced by:



Based on the RNIB Living Well with Diabetes Folder developed by Elaine Appelbee in collaboration with local communities and health service providers.

Special thanks to Asthma UK for their contribution to the Asthma Self Care Pack.

The wording in this publication can be made available in large print or Braille. Please call 01274 437963.

Self Care is committed to working in collaboration across Bradford CBMDC, Bradford City CCG, Bradford Districts CCG and Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven.