

## Preventing asthma episodes and controlling your child's asthma

For children with asthma, having an asthma management plan is the best way to prevent symptoms. An asthma management plan is something given to you from your child's doctor to help you control your child's asthma.

The plan should allow your child to:

- ✓ Be active without having asthma symptoms
- ✓ Fully take part in playing and sports
- ✓ Sleep all night, without asthma symptoms
- ✓ Be able to go to school or work
- ✓ Have the clearest lungs possible
- ✓ Have a few or no reaction from the asthma medications
- ✓ Have no ER visits or stays in the hospital
- ✓ Have medications refilled before your child runs out

## Four parts of your child's asthma management plan:

### 1 Know your child's asthma triggers and help to stay away from them.

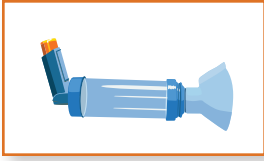
Staying away from triggers is the best way to reduce your child's need for medications and to prevent asthma episodes. But first, you have to learn what those triggers are. Anytime your child has an asthma episode, think about what he or she was around the past day or so.

Answer questions like these in a notebook or on your calendar. *Was my child:*

- ✍ Around cigarette smoke?
- ✍ Around dusting or vacuuming?
- ✍ Around an animal?
- ✍ Sick with a cold or other sickness?
- ✍ Running, playing or exercising?
- ✍ Upset, stressed, excited or tired?

**Get your child's medications refilled before you run out. Do not go to the ER to fill your child's medications.**

## 2 Have your child take his or her asthma medications the right way.



- Ask your provider to watch your child and check if your child is taking the medications right. Often it is hard for children and the provider will provide a spacer or holding chamber. This device attaches to the inhaler to help the medication reach the lungs.
- Most children with asthma have at least two different asthma medications. Be sure you know how and when to take your child's medications before you leave your provider's office. If you need extra help with how your child should take the medications, you can go to your local pharmacy and ask the pharmacist for help.

If your provider gives your child medications to take each day, make sure you do that to prevent asthma symptoms.

## 3 Take the attached Asthma Action Plan to your provider to have him or her fill it out with you and your child.

- Use your Asthma Action Plan as a guide for when your child needs to take his or her medications or when you might need to call your provider or the Nurse Advice Line (if after clinic hours).

The Nurse Advice Line is available for you to call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. This is a free service for HPSM members only. The Nurse Advice Line number is **1-866-535-6977**.

## 4 Track your child's asthma and know early warning signs that it may be getting worse.

- Asthma episodes almost never start without warning. Some children feel early symptoms, including: coughing, chest tightness or hearing wheezing in the lungs.
- Because airways to the lungs narrow slowly, your child may not feel symptoms until his or her airways are badly blocked. The key to taking care of your child's asthma is following the Asthma Action Plan and having them take their medications as directed by their provider.

Review your child's Asthma Action Plan to check to see what medications he or she needs to take or if you need call your provider, the Nurse Advice Line or **911**. If it is an emergency, call **911** right away.