



# Take Control of Your Asthma

## What asthma feels like

If you have asthma, you probably know it. It's a condition where your airways tighten up and narrow, making it hard to move air in and out of your lungs.

So you may have:

- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing (a whistling noise when breathing out)
- A cough (sometimes worse at night)
- Soreness or tightening in your chest

Your doctor can help you figure out if you have asthma. And you can work on an action plan together to keep your lungs healthy.

## Keep a symptoms journal

You may need to take a few tests for your doctor to know if you have asthma. Even then, the best clue is how well you describe your symptoms at your visit. It's a good idea to keep an asthma journal so you don't forget. Write down:

- The symptom, and when and where you were when it happened

- What could have triggered it
- How long it lasted

It only takes a minute. But it can help you and your doctor put together a serious asthma action plan!

## Know your triggers

A trigger is something that causes your asthma to flare up. For some, it's cats. For others, it's exercise. Other triggers:

- Dust mites
- Mold
- Animals with fur or feathers shed dander (allergens)
- Smoke
- Cockroach droppings
- Chemicals in the air
- Weather - very humid or very windy conditions can trigger asthma
- Colds, flu and sinus infections

Avoiding an attack starts with knowing what can cause it. That's why tracking those triggers is so important!

## More way to stay prepared

Even if your asthma is under control, you should arm yourself against future attack. Some tips:

- Label your medicine: Use tags like “daily” or “wheezing” so you know which to grab at a glance.
- Always carry your inhaler: Keep a spare at your work, school or gym too.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet: Especially if you’ve already had severe attacks.

**If you have not been to the doctor for a checkup recently that is okay.** Call your doctor today to schedule an asthma checkup. If you need help making an appointment or a ride, please call Aetna Better Health member services representatives. Call **1-866-638-1232** (PA Relay **711**). We’re available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

To learn more, visit:  
[www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania](http://www.aetnabetterhealth.com/pennsylvania)



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