

WINTER CHECKLIST

FOR PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA



Colds and flu can hit hard if you have asthma. The common cold is behind 4 out of 5 bad asthma attacks.

IF YOU GET SICK

Follow your written asthma action plan. If you don't have one, contact your doctor to check what you should do.

- Get lots of rest & take care of yourself
- Stay home so that you can avoid infecting others
- If your symptoms are severe or rapidly get worse, call your doctor immediately
- Antibiotics are not recommended for treating viruses like the common cold.

KEY STEPS FOR ASTHMA MANAGEMENT IN WINTER

It is important that you make sure your lungs are in the best possible shape for winter. You can do this by following the simple steps outlined below.

GET YOUR LUNGS CHECKED

See your doctor for an asthma review before the cold and flu season arrives. Your doctor can check the health of your lungs and work out if you need to change your asthma medicines so you stay well over winter.

FOLLOW YOUR ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Together with your doctor, develop or update your personal written asthma action plan with instructions on how to manage your asthma over winter. A written asthma action plan helps you recognise when your asthma is getting worse and tells you what to do in response. Acting quickly can help prevent a mild flare-up from turning into a serious attack.

PROTECT YOURSELF

Keep warm if cold air triggers your asthma. Avoid contact with anyone who's sick and control germs by washing your hands regularly. You can also ask your doctor about a flu vaccination.

USE YOUR MEDICATIONS WISELY

Tell your doctor if you have been using your reliever puffer more than twice a week or are having asthma symptoms at night. These are important signs that your lungs may not be in the best condition for winter colds and flu. If you have been prescribed a preventer medication make sure you use it - even if you feel well.

TAKE EXTRA CARE IF YOU ARE OVER 65

Colds and flu can hit extra hard in seniors with asthma so ask your doctor about flu and/or pneumonia vaccinations. Don't ignore symptoms or put off seeking help as quick action can help keep you out of hospital

Make sure you're taking your medicines the best way - ask your pharmacist or nurse to check you're using your puffer or inhaler correctly. If you're still using a nebuliser, ask your doctor about changing to a puffer and spacer as it works just as well and is easier, faster and cheaper to use than a nebuliser.