

Find an **allergist**

Find *relief*

www.AllergyAndAsthmaRelief.org



Find Relief for Your Child's Asthma

Asthma is a chronic condition that affects the airways in your child's or teen's lungs, making it difficult to breathe. Although there is no cure, with treatment, your child can lead a full and active life.

An allergist can provide expert care to help develop a treatment plan and manage your child's asthma symptoms. Allergists are physicians who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of asthma and other allergic diseases.

The goal of asthma treatment is to have your child or teen feel great with the least amount of medicine to get the job done. An allergist can create the best path for asthma control by working with you to find the right options.

When You Meet with an Allergist

These are some questions an allergist may ask to understand your child's asthma and determine treatment:

- What are your child's symptoms, and how often do they occur?
- Do symptoms keep them from playing, exercising, or participating in sports?
- Do they wake up at night due to coughing or wheezing?

- What things are triggers for their symptoms?
- Do they miss daycare, preschool, or school because of their symptoms?
- If they have a quick-relief inhaler, how often do they use it? Refill it in a year?
- Have they ever needed an oral steroid for significant symptoms?
- Have their symptoms ever been so substantial to require urgent care, emergency room visits, or hospitalization?

Asthma Treatment

There are many effective treatments for asthma, with exciting new options becoming available. Your teen may have more treatment options than a younger child, as new treatments for kids over age 12 have been approved. Check with your allergist to see what treatments are now available for teens.

It is essential that your child use all medications as directed. This will allow them to go to school, participate in sports and activities, and get a good night's sleep. Following up with your allergist is also important to find the least amount of the right medicine to keep symptoms under control.

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Your allergist can also help you understand your child's asthma triggers and work with you to reduce those triggers. Common triggers include viral infections, allergens (dust mites, pets, pollens, mold), airway irritants (tobacco smoke, pollution, air fresheners, strong chemicals), and exercise.

How is asthma treated?

An asthma treatment plan includes medications tailored to your child's needs. Asthma medications work in two main ways:

- **Quick-relief bronchodilators.** These improve asthma symptoms quickly by relaxing the muscles around the airways to open the breathing tubes. They relieve symptoms but do not treat the inflammation associated with asthma. Frequent use of these medications could mean your child's asthma is not well controlled.
- **Long-term control.** Usually taken regularly to control inflammation of the airways and prevent future symptoms. These medications may include:
 - Inhaled steroids – considered the gold standard of asthma treatment, they help reduce airway inflammation.
 - Combination inhalers – containing both inhaled steroids and longer-acting bronchodilators. New recommendations for a specific type of combined inhaled steroid with formoterol (ICS-formoterol) may be used for both quick relief and long-term control.

- A daily, chewable tablet that blocks chemicals (leukotrienes) involved in immune system responses
- Allergen immunotherapy (Allergy shots or tablets): These may be appropriate for children who are 5 years or older who have allergies that are triggering their asthma. Allergy shots can reduce/eliminate allergies as a trigger and lead to a long-term improvement in asthma control. There are also dissolvable tablets which can be placed under the tongue (sublingual) to reduce certain allergies. You and your allergist can discuss which option is best for your child.

Asthma Medicine Delivery

- **Asthma inhalers**, which may come in an aerosol or dry powder form, are used to get the medicine to the lungs. Children may need to use a spacer with their inhalers. A spacer is a special tube that attaches directly to an inhaler to help improve medication delivery.
- **Nebulizer:** A nebulizer is a small machine that turns liquid medicine into a mist, delivered through a tube and mask, which may be used to provide either a bronchodilator or a steroid to the lungs.



Both devices work well with proper instructions, and usage varies based on insurance and patient preferences.

When is additional treatment necessary?

An essential part of managing asthma is learning to recognize signs that it is getting worse. If your child or teen is having worsening

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asthma symptoms, your allergist may adjust their treatment plan. Common signs of a flare-up or poorly controlled asthma include:

- Inability to do everyday activities.
- Excessive coughing with or without wheezing.
- Needing the quick-relief inhaler more than twice per week.
- Inability to sleep due to cough or feeling tight in the chest.
- A persistent cough that won't go away.

Some children, despite taking asthma medications, need more therapy. Your allergist can prescribe additional therapy to improve your child's asthma, which may include:

- **Biologics:** Biologic therapies treat specific inflammatory cells and proteins involved in asthma inflammation. Biologics have been shown to decrease the number of asthma flare-ups and improve quality of life. Your allergist may do tests to determine if your child could benefit from a biologic and which one may work best.

Asthma Checklist

There are simple steps you can take to improve your child's asthma control in addition to medication:

- Reduce exposure to allergic triggers such as mold, dust mites, pet dander, and pollen.
- Keep your child away from tobacco smoke.

- Tell your allergist about any other medical conditions.
- Learn the correct technique for using inhalers or nebulizers.
- Talk to your allergist about a personalized asthma action plan to learn how to take care of your child's asthma.
- Seek help from your allergist if it seems difficult or inconvenient to give the prescribed medication, or if your child doesn't want to take it.
- Continue all medications as directed even after your child feels better.
- Schedule and keep regular appointments with your allergist.

To learn more about pediatric asthma, visit www.acaai.org.

