

# TOP 10 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ASTHMA

1. Asthma is a chronic disease. It doesn't go away, it can't be cured, and people don't grow out of it (usually). It can, however, be **controlled**.
2. Everyone has different asthma triggers. Common triggers are:
  - Smoke from cigarettes, etc.
  - Dust / dust mites
  - Roaches & Mice
  - Strong smells like: perfumes, paint,
  - Cold air
  - Chemicals, cleaners, pesticides
  - Airborne changes in temperature
  - Exercise
  - Air pollution
3. It is important to know individual asthma signs and symptoms. Common warning signs are:
  - Being short of breath
  - Wheezing
  - Feeling sweaty / getting sudden chills
  - Feeling aggravated for no reason
  - Fast or shallow breathing
  - Coughing especially at night
  - Funny feeling in chest or throat
4. There are 2 types of asthma medications:
  - **Controller medications- prevent** asthma attacks from starting by reducing airway swelling and mucus production. These medications are **taken daily, even when feeling fine**.
  - **Relief or rescue medications (also called bronchodilators)** - relax the muscles around the airways to **stop asthma attacks once they have started** and provide quick relief from symptoms. Take them as soon as symptoms start. They also can prevent attacks if your child has asthma triggered by exercise. Take them as directed (usually 15-20 minutes before starting exercise).
5. Keep relief medication close by at all times. This means keeping medicines at school or wherever your child spends the day. Everyone taking care of your child should know what to look for and what to do for asthma.
6. Keep your child calm and breathing slowly and deeply (also called "belly breathing") to help during early warning signs of an asthma episode.
7. **Use a spacer** with inhaled asthma medications known as Metered Dose Inhalers (MDIs).
8. Every child should have an Asthma Action Plan from a doctor. Keep this at home, at school, and wherever your child spends a lot of time [http://www.fha.state.md.us/pdf/mch/Asthma\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.fha.state.md.us/pdf/mch/Asthma_Action_Plan.pdf)
9. Children with asthma should see their physician regularly (every 3-4 months) - and **within a few days** if they have been to the emergency room or have been hospitalized due to asthma
10. Other medications, even those that don't need prescriptions, can interfere with asthma meds. Check with the physician before taking anything new.