



Spring 2017

Make an asthma action plan

Asthma has a variety of symptoms, like wheezing and chest tightness. But there's one thing it shouldn't make you feel: powerless.

In fact, there's a lot you can do to keep asthma from flaring up in the first place. Your doctor can show you how.

Find your triggers

The first step is to know your asthma triggers. These are things—like dust or smoke—that cause your asthma symptoms. Triggers vary from person to person. Once you know yours, you can avoid them.

Keep symptoms in check

The next step is to take your meds the right way. Most people with asthma use

both long-term and fast-relief medicines.

Long-term: These help keep the airways open and prevent flare-ups. They come in both inhaled and pill form.

Fast-relief: These can help control asthma symptoms when they occur. Keep your inhaler with you at all times.

Your doctor may also suggest a peak flow meter. This tool

shows how well your lungs are working. Your doctor will help you find your personal best peak flow number. That way you know when your asthma is under control.

Be prepared

You'll also need to know what to do if you have a serious asthma attack. Call your doctor if:

- Your meds don't seem to be working.
- Your peak flow number is less than half of your personal best.

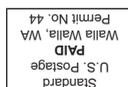
And you should call 911 if:

- You have trouble walking or talking because you're out of breath.
- Your lips or fingernails are blue.

Check with the experts

Get checkups regularly. These visits are a good time for you to ask any questions about your asthma treatment.

Sources: American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute



You have rights and responsibilities

We strive to treat you with respect and dignity. We do not discriminate against members based on age, race, sex, religion, national origin, or any other reason that's against the law. Our providers must also follow the same standards.

You have certain rights and responsibilities as well. Knowing them helps you get the covered services you need. You'll find your rights and responsibilities listed in your Member Handbook and on our website, aetnabetterhealth.com/louisiana. Click on "Benefits" under "Member Information." Then click on "Rights & Responsibilities." If you have any questions or would like a copy of your rights and responsibilities, call us at **1-855-242-0802**.



The asthma-allergy connection

What's the link?

If you have asthma, your airways are swollen and sensitive. Asthma triggers cause the airways to tighten further and make breathing more difficult. There is no cure for asthma, but medicines—and avoiding asthma triggers—can help you manage the disease.

Not everyone who has allergies has asthma, but many people with asthma also have allergies. Allergies can trigger your airways to narrow. It's important to know your allergy triggers, or allergens, so you can avoid them.

Common allergens that make asthma worse:

- Cockroaches
- Animal dander
- Dust mites
- Indoor mold
- Pollen
- Outdoor mold

Other asthma triggers may include:

- Cold air
- Exercise
- Some illnesses and medicines
- Tobacco smoke, air pollution and strong odors

Testing for asthma

Spirometry: This test measures air flow in your lungs—how much air you can breathe in and how fast you can blow it out.

Physical exam: Your doctor will probably ask questions about your symptoms and check your breathing.

Your doctor may also recommend:

- Allergy testing to see what allergens might affect you
- A test to check how sensitive your airways are
- Tests to see if other medical problems, such as sleep apnea, are causing your asthma symptoms

Testing for allergies

Skin testing is the most common and reliable method. Small amounts of specific allergens are placed in the skin to determine if there are any reactions.

Sources: American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

Does your child need help from a mental health expert?

You probably know right away when your child is getting a cold. Maybe even before the first sneeze. That's because you know your child better than anyone else does.

And that gives you an edge when it comes to spotting emotional or mental health issues. Such problems may need a doctor's help. That's why it's important to know the signs of a serious problem. Here's what to watch for:

- Changes in sleeping habits
- Nightmares
- Changes in eating habits
- More physical problems than usual
- Trouble handling everyday problems
- More anxiety or sadness
- Frequent bursts of anger
- Strange feelings or actions
- Thoughts of death

- A big drop in grades
- Refusal to go to school
- Stopping normal social activities
- Being disobedient or aggressive for more than six months
- Threatening to hurt self or others
- Stealing or damaging other people's belongings

Some things on this list could be caused by normal issues, like a new baby in the family. Every child is different. But you know yours. So be watchful. And if you think your child is in trouble, talk to your pediatrician. He or she can help you find expert care.

Sources: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; National Institute of Mental Health



As a member of Aetna Better Health of Louisiana, there are care managers available to assist you with all of your health care needs. Every member has the option to opt in or out of care management. To enroll in care management, please contact us at **1-855-242-0802.**

Quality improvement at Aetna Better Health of Louisiana

Our Quality Management department wants to make sure you get good care and services.

That includes:

- Health management programs that work for you
- Easy access to quality medical and behavioral health care
- Help with any complex or chronic conditions or illnesses
- Support when you need it most

- High satisfaction with your doctors and with us

Our quality improvement activities each year include:

- Contacting you to remind you to get care (like well-child checkups)
- Sending you postcards or newsletters about health topics
- Reviewing the number, quality and kinds of services you receive

- Reminding your doctors and you about preventive health care
- Making sure you're continuing to get the care you need
- Checking that your calls are answered quickly and that you get the right information
- Ensuring your doctor has all the information needed to care for you or your child

We have many more quality programs. You can call

Member Services at **1-855-242-0802** to learn more about what we do to improve your care. We're also happy to give you a printed copy of our program goals and how we're doing. Or you can read updates on our website at **aetnabetterhealth.com/louisiana**.

Watch out for medicines that boost blood pressure

Do you have high blood pressure? Here's some information you need to know:

Some medicines can raise blood pressure. Others can keep blood pressure drugs from working the way they should. This can be true of both over-the-counter and prescription medicines.

That's good to know because it can help you avoid a boost in your blood pressure.

The following types of medicines can cause problems:

- Steroids. This can include drugs that are used to treat asthma.
- Nasal decongestants—products you might buy to treat cold symptoms.
- Birth control pills.
- Hormone therapy.

Pain relievers can lead to high blood pressure too.

Ask first

It's best to be cautious when you take any medicine. If you have high blood pressure or take medicine for it:



- Talk to your doctor before you use any over-the-counter medicines. This includes vitamins and herbs.
- Check the labels. Some have warnings for people who have high blood pressure.

Sources: American Heart Association; National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute

HEALTH TIP: Some medicines are high in sodium. This can boost blood pressure. There can be more sodium in one dose than people with high blood pressure should have for a whole day.

Important information for members, parents and guardians

Each year we like to remind you to review some important information in your Member Handbook. This is the handbook we sent you when you joined Aetna Better Health of Louisiana. You may have also seen the information in your member newsletters or on our website.

This information helps you stay active and informed. It can help you when making health care choices for yourself or your child. This notice gives a quick overview of what you need to know. You can find more details in your Member Handbook.

If you didn't receive a Member Handbook, you can call Member Services to request one. Or you can read a copy under the "For Members" tab on our website, aetnabetterhealth.com/louisiana.

Here's how to reach us:

• **By phone:** Call Member Services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at **1-855-242-0802** (toll-free).

• **Website:** aetnabetterhealth.com/louisiana. Click on "Contact us."

• **For those who have a hard time seeing, hearing, reading or speaking English:** We have services available to help you communicate with us. You can call the Telecommunications Relay Service, **1-855-242-0802**, TTY **711**, toll-free.

We can also provide information in other formats. If you need help with language or translation services, call Member Services at **1-855-242-0802**. It's available at no cost to you.

This newsletter is published as a community service for the friends and members of **Aetna Better Health of Louisiana**, 2400 Veterans Memorial Blvd., Suite 200, Kenner, LA 70062.

This is general health information and should not replace the advice or care you get from your provider. Always ask your provider about your own health care needs.

Models may be used in photos and illustrations.

Contact us
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
1-855-242-0802
TTY: 711

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LA-17-02-06
Date of issue: 03/15/17

Nondiscrimination Notice

Aetna complies with applicable federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex. Aetna does not exclude people or treat them differently because of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex.

Aetna:

- Provides free aids and services to people with disabilities to communicate effectively with us, such as:
 - o Qualified sign language interpreters
 - o Written information in other formats (large print, audio, accessible electronic formats, other formats)
- Provides free language services to people whose primary language is not English, such as:
 - o Qualified interpreters
 - o Information written in other languages

If you need a qualified interpreter, written information in other formats, translation or other services, call the number on your ID card or **1-800-385-4104**.

If you believe that Aetna has failed to provide these services or discriminated in another way on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability or sex, you can file a grievance with our Civil Rights Coordinator at:

Address: Attn: Civil Rights Coordinator
4500 E. Cotton Center Blvd
Phoenix, AZ 85040
Telephone: 1-888-234-7358, TTY 711
Email: MedicaidCRCoordinator@aetna.com

You can file a grievance in person or by mail or email. If you need help filing a grievance, our Civil Rights Coordinator is available to help you.

You can also file a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office for Civil Rights electronically through the Office for Civil Rights Complaint Portal, available at <https://ocrportal.hhs.gov/ocr/portal/lobby.jsf>, or by mail or phone at: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 200 Independence Avenue, SW Room 509F, HHH Building, Washington, D.C. 20201, 1-800-368-1019, 800-537-7697 (TDD).

Complaint forms are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/file/index.html>.

Aetna is the brand name used for products and services provided by one or more of the Aetna group of subsidiary companies, including Aetna Life Insurance Company, and its affiliates.

Multi-language Interpreter Services

ENGLISH: ATTENTION: If you speak English, language assistance services, free of charge, are available to you. Call the number on the back of your ID card or **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

SPANISH: ATENCIÓN: Si habla español, tiene a su disposición servicios gratuitos de asistencia lingüística. Llame al número que aparece en el reverso de su tarjeta de identificación o al **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

FRENCH: ATTENTION: si vous parlez français, des services d'aide linguistique vous sont proposés gratuitement. Appelez le numéro indiqué au verso de votre carte d'identité ou le **1-800-385-4104 (ATS : 711)**.

VIETNAMESE: CHÚ Ý: nếu bạn nói tiếng việt, có các dịch vụ hỗ trợ ngôn ngữ miễn phí dành cho bạn. Hãy gọi số có ở mặt sau thẻ id của bạn hoặc **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

CHINESE: 注意：如果您使用繁體中文，您可以免費獲得語言援助服務。請致電您的 ID 卡背面的電話號碼或 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**。

ARABIC: ملحوظة: إذا كنت تتحدث باللغة العربية، فإن خدمات المساعدة اللغوية تتوافر لك بالمجان. اتصل على الرقم الموجود خلف بطاقتك الشخصية أو على **1-800-385-4104 (للصم والبكم: 711)**

TAGALOG: PAUNAWA: Kung nagsasalita ka ng wikang Tagalog, mayroon kang magagamit na mga libreng serbisyo para sa tulong sa wika. Tumawag sa numero na nasa likod ng iyong ID card o sa **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

KOREAN: 주의: 한국어를 사용하시는 경우, 언어 지원 서비스를 무료로 이용하실 수 있습니다. 귀하의 ID 카드 뒷면에 있는 번호로나 **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** 번으로 연락해 주십시오.

PORTUGUESE: ATENÇÃO: Se fala português, encontram-se disponíveis serviços linguísticos, grátis. Ligue para o número que se encontra na parte de trás do seu cartão de identificação ou **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

LAOTIAN: ເຊີນຊາບ: ຖ້າວ່າທ່ານເວົ້າພາສາລາວ, ການບໍລິການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອດ້ານພາສາ, ໂດຍບໍ່ເສຍຄ່າ, ແມ່ນມີພ້ອມໃຫ້ທ່ານ. ໂທຫາເບີໂທທີ່ຢູ່ດ້ານຫຼັງບັດປະຈຳຕົວຂອງທ່ານ ຫຼື **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

JAPANESE: 注意事項:日本語をお話になる方は、無料で言語サポートのサービスをご利用いただけます。IDカード裏面の電話番号、または**1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**までご連絡ください。

URDU: توجہ دیں: اگر آپ اردو زبان بولتے ہیں، تو زبان سے متعلق مدد کی خدمات آپ کے لئے مفت دستیاب ہیں - اپنے شناختی کارڈ کے پیچھے موجود نمبر پر یا **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** پر رابطہ کریں۔

GERMAN: ACHTUNG: Wenn Sie deutschen sprechen, können Sie unseren kostenlosen Sprachservice nutzen. Rufen Sie die Nummer auf der Rückseite Ihrer ID-Karte oder **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** an.

PERSIAN: اگر به زبان فارسی صحبت می کنید، به صورت رایگان می توانید به خدمات کمک زبانی دسترسی داشته باشید. با شماره درج شده در پشت کارت شناسایی یا با شماره **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)** تماس بگیرید.

RUSSIAN: ВНИМАНИЕ: если вы говорите на русском языке, вам могут предоставить бесплатные услуги перевода. Позвоните по номеру, указанному на обратной стороне вашей идентификационной карточки, или по номеру **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**.

THAI: ข้อควรระวัง: ถ้าคุณพูดภาษาไทย คุณสามารถใช้บริการช่วยเหลือทางภาษาได้ฟรี โทรติดต่อหมายเลขที่อยู่ด้านหลังบัตร ID ของคุณ หรือหมายเลข **1-800-385-4104 (TTY: 711)**