

check yourself

Many asthma attacks come on gradually, and can be prevented from getting worse. The signs to watch out for are:

- ▶ **needing more reliever inhaler**
- ▶ **waking at night with cough or tight chest**
- ▶ **your reliever not lasting as long**
- ▶ **feeling short of breath or coughing more**
- ▶ **daily life being affected by your asthma**

When your asthma's bad

If your asthma is getting worse, and you have a cold or flu, it's usually best to take **double** the amount of BROWN inhaler that you normally have.

If you're still getting worse, phone the doctor or make an appointment. If it's at night, phone the surgery for details of our on-call service.

If you're not sure what to do, speak to the nurse or doctor, or phone **NHS Direct** on **0845 46 47** for advice.

YOUR MEDICINES... [name, colour, dose]

Reliever:

Preventer:



Practice: 225-6699

Repeat prescriptions: 256-2777

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This leaflet is not intended to replace personal medical advice. If you are in any doubt about your health, please consult the doctor. The Robert Darbishire Practice cannot be held responsible for any harm resulting from use of this leaflet.

Asthma and You

The ROBERT
DARBISHIRE
PRACTICE

Asthma is a common condition. It causes the tubes in your lungs to be inflamed and irritable. This makes them tighter, and mucus can build up. People with asthma may get a cough, noisy breathing, or find it difficult to breathe at times.

Asthma often runs in families, and is more common in people who have hay fever or eczema. It is often made worse by colds and flu, smoke, dust, and animals.



How is asthma treated?

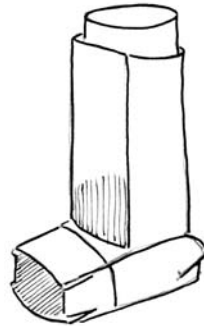
There is no cure for asthma, so we aim to keep it under control. Modern treatments are safe and work well, and you should be able to lead **a completely normal life**.

Most treatments need to be breathed into your lungs. The treatments come in different types of inhaler, and the nurse or doctor can help choose one that suits you. Always read the label in the packet, and make sure you know how to use your inhaler best. It's helpful to learn to tell when your inhaler is running out, too - ask us how.

Your inhaler

Relievers

These are usually BLUE. They work by opening up the narrowed tubes in your lungs, and make it easier to breathe. They should work within a few minutes. It's a good idea to keep the inhaler with you at all times, just in case you need it. Some people find it helps to have a spare inhaler in a bag, or at work or school. If you are needing your reliever every day, you probably need a PREVENTER as well - please speak to the doctor. **If your reliever isn't lasting as long**, please speak to the doctor - especially if it doesn't last 4 hours.



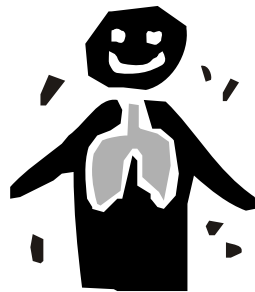
Your inhaler may look like this

Preventers

These come in several different colours. They work by calming the inflammation inside your lungs, and making them less irritable. They **MUST** be taken **TWICE EVERY DAY**. If you have a **cold or flu**, it's usually a good idea to take **twice the normal number of puffs**, for a week. This should help keep your asthma under control. Please speak to the doctor if it doesn't. Preventers often contain steroids - they are extremely safe in normal doses.

Looking after yourself

Asthma is often made worse by things like cigarette smoke, dust, animals and some medicines. You can improve your symptoms by avoiding these things, and checking with the pharmacist before taking painkillers. One of the best things to do for your asthma is to **stop smoking**, and not breathe other people's smoke. If you're finding it hard to quit, speak to one of the nurses - there are lots of ways they can help. Keeping fit may also help your asthma - regular swimming, cycling or fast walking are good ways.



Flu jabs

Your asthma may get much worse if you have a cold or 'flu. Having a flu jab **every autumn** will help prevent you getting full-blown 'flu. We'll write to tell you when your vaccination is due.

Have a checkup

It's a good idea to make an appointment at least every 6-12 months, for a check-up of your asthma. The nurse or doctor can check your symptoms, and make sure your medication is working fully. Please bring your inhalers with you.

Repeat prescriptions

You can often get a prescription without being seen by the nurse or doctor. You can ring us on **256-2777** - 24 hours a day. Please give us 3 days' notice, so that your doctor can check the medication properly.

NHS Smoking Helpline
0800 169 0 169
(free)