

Healthy TOGETHER

Spring 2018



Provided as a benefit
to Oregon Health Plan
Care Coordination
Program clients

1-800-562-4620

www.OHPCC.org

Stay on Top of Your Asthma

When your asthma is acting up, it is a clear reminder to take your medicine and stay on top of your care. But what about when you feel great?

It is important to follow your treatment plan even when you are symptom free. Asthma is a serious condition and can be fatal if not managed properly. In fact, about 10 people in the U.S. die from asthma attacks each day. Thankfully, most people with asthma can expect to have few problems if they manage their condition well. Remember these steps:

Take your medicine. It is important to take your long-term control medicine exactly as prescribed. These drugs reduce inflammation and prevent asthma symptoms over time. If you are feeling good, it does not mean you do not need them. It means the drugs are working. Let your provider know if you have problems with side effects or the cost of medicine.

Avoid triggers. Most likely, you know what things can cause your

asthma to flare. But keep up your guard. Continue to avoid your triggers or reduce your exposure when possible.

Know your symptoms. It is important to pay attention to your symptoms and know when you might be headed for an asthma attack. Work with your doctor to identify your early warning signs. These mild symptoms can begin even when your condition seems under control. By acting fast when these symptoms occur, you can lower your chance for an attack.

Make a plan. Fill out an asthma action plan, if you have not done so already. The plan details when to take your medicines, how to recognize and respond to worsening symptoms, when to call for help and more. If you already have a plan, update it with your doctor regularly, and keep it where it is useful.

TAKE ACTION

To learn more about asthma action plans, visit our online educational materials at www.ohpcc.org, then search for "asthma action plan."



8 Tips for Improving Mental Health

Happiness is not something you get once you are successful. Happiness is something that you can work on right now. Learn some lifestyle changes that can help boost your mood.

1. Seek social support. Friends, loved ones and other people you trust can offer support when you are going through a hard time. Confide in the people who do not judge or criticize you.

2. Join a support group. Friends can help you feel better, but sometimes a support group is better. Look for a group for your specific situation, such as dealing with grief or living with depression. You will meet people who understand what you are going through.

3. Learn more. If you have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder, learn about it. Educating yourself can help you make informed decisions about your care. The National Institute of Mental Health, www.nimh.nih.gov, is a reliable source of information.

4. Work up a sweat. Exercise releases feel-good chemicals known as endorphins in the brain. Exercise also reduces fatigue and can help you

concentrate. A quick walk can improve your mood for hours.

5. Cope with stress. Some stress cannot be avoided. But you can reduce some forms of stress and change how you respond to stressful situations. If your to-do list is too long, identify things that have to get done today and things that can wait until later. Sometimes simply counting to 10 or 20 can help you relax.

6. Get help for mental disorders. Many mental disorders, including depression, are treatable. If you think you may have depression, anxiety or another mental health condition, talk with your primary care doctor. He or she may refer you to a mental health professional.

7. Take care of yourself. Sleep enough. Eat well. Exercise regularly. These

simple solutions work. Make time for yourself, including time to simply relax and do things that you enjoy.

8. Reach out for urgent help if needed. If you or someone you love is considering suicide or going through an emotional crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)**. The phone line is open 24/7. If you are in immediate danger of hurting yourself or someone else, call **911**.



Allergies: Your Spring Survival Guide



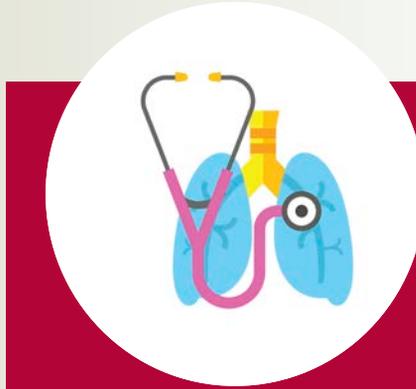
Coughing, sneezing, itchy eyes—the symptoms of seasonal allergies are no fun. You might want to treat your symptoms on your own with over-the-counter medicine. But allergy symptoms can be similar to the symptoms of a cold or other respiratory problem. It is important to talk to your doctor to get a correct diagnosis. If not, you could end up taking medicines that are not going to help your allergies.

Similar Symptoms

Colds are caused by viruses. In people with seasonal allergies, the body thinks that certain pollens and molds are enemies. In response, the body sends out chemicals to try to attack them.

Other differences between allergies and colds include:

- How long they last—Colds last 3 to 14 days. Allergies last as long



ASTHMA AND ALLERGIES

Experts say that as much as 40 percent of people with allergies also have asthma. Controlling nasal allergies can ease asthma symptoms a great deal.

as you are exposed to the allergen. This could be days or months.

- Symptoms—Cold symptoms can include a cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose and fatigue. Seasonal allergies can have the same symptoms. But they also can cause itchy, watery eyes and frequent sneezing.

Preventing Allergic Reactions

There is no cure for seasonal allergies. But there are things you can do to help control your allergy symptoms. Taking the right medicines can help you feel better. Avoiding the allergens or substances that cause your symptoms can also help.

To avoid seasonal allergy triggers:

- Stay indoors between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., when pollen counts are highest. Windy days also are a problem because pollen, dust and mold get stirred up in the air.
- Remove your shoes at the door when returning home, and change your clothes.
- Wash your hair after spending time outside. When you are outside, your hair acts like a mop and soaks up pollen and other triggers.
- Keep windows shut and run an air filter or air conditioner. Clean the filter often.
- Vacuum with a HEPA vacuum cleaner. These types of vacuums are the best at removing dust mites and other allergens.

Allergies can make you miserable. But with proper diagnosis and treatment, you can enjoy an active lifestyle at any time of year.



**We are here to help
— any day, any time.**

**24/7 NURSE ADVICE LINE
1-800-562-4620**

Call ANYTIME you want
to talk to a nurse.

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Online:
www.quitnow.net/oregon

Call **1-800-562-4620** to discuss any of the topics in this newsletter or any other health issues. Visit our website at **www.OHPCC.org**.

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What to Do with a **Dental Emergency**

When you have a toothache or other dental problem, your only thought is to get it fixed fast. Fast treatment means the emergency room, right?

The emergency room can handle just about anything. But for problems with your mouth, your dentist is the better option. Dentists have special equipment and training to figure out what is wrong with your mouth and how to fix it.

To avoid a dental emergency, here are some tips.

- ✓ **DO** brush twice a day and floss to keep your teeth healthy.
- ✓ **DO** schedule and keep dental appointments to address issues before they become problems.
- ✓ **DO** wear a mouth guard when participating in sports.
- ✗ **DO NOT** use a sharp object, like scissors or a knife, to remove anything from between your teeth.
- ✗ **DO NOT** chew food that can crack a tooth, such as hard candy, popcorn kernels or ice.



If you think you have a broken jaw, or if your mouth is bleeding and will not stop, then head to the emergency room. The same is true if your dentist's office is closed and you cannot wait for help. But in general, when it comes to your teeth or mouth, think of your dentist first.