

Living Well

With asthma: self care booklet



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Learning to manage your condition

If you have a long-term condition, there are extra things you may need to consider including:

- Making changes to your diet
- Different types of exercise
- Different types of medication you may need to take

It is important to stay active and do things that are important to you.

Self care involves looking at what you can do and want to do, rather than what you can't do.

When you talk to your doctor or nurse about your condition, you may want to discuss some of the things you need to do to stay well.

Some of these will be things that you can do yourself including:

- Eating healthily
- Exercising
- Taking your medicines at the right time

This booklet is designed to help you live well with asthma. The information is general as people will be affected differently and have different capabilities. Please use a smart phone to scan the QR codes to find more information, or visit the Long Term Conditions section on the Living Well website.

An app is available to help you manage your asthma better. Search Asthma Hub UK on Google Play and Apple App Store.



NHS Choices

You can find lots of useful information about keeping well and healthy living ideas on the NHS website.

Living Well in Bradford district

There's lots of information about healthy living and links to local services and groups on the Living Well website.



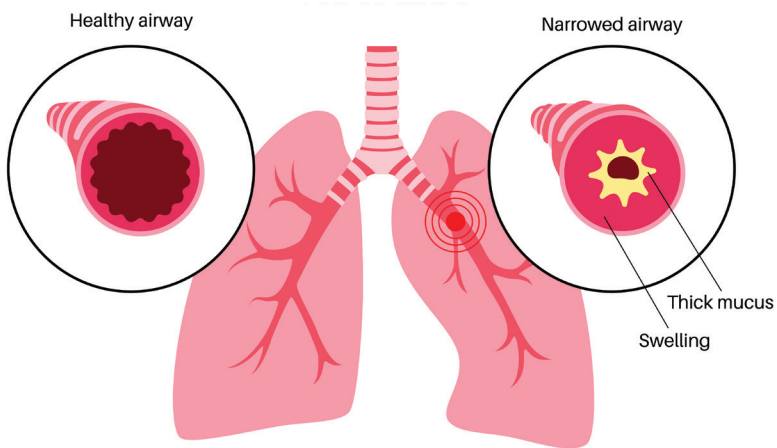
What is asthma?

Asthma is caused by inflammation of the airways. These are the small tubes, called bronchi, which carry air in and out of the lungs. If you have asthma, the bronchi will be inflamed and more sensitive than normal.

When you come into contact with something that irritates your lungs, known as a trigger, your airways become narrow, the muscles around them tighten and there is an increase in the production of sticky mucus (phlegm).

This leads to symptoms including:

- Difficulty breathing
- Wheezing and coughing
- A tight chest



Please scan the QR code for detailed information about asthma, its causes and how you can keep



it under control on the Asthma and Lung UK website or call the helpline on: 0300 222 5800.

Please scan the QR code for more information about the causes of asthma, diagnosis and treatment on the NHS website.



Living Well with asthma

Your asthma may get better or worse at different times. There may be times when you have asthma symptoms, but in between you may be generally well, even for many years. In this booklet are some things you can do to help keep your asthma under control.

Working in partnership with your doctor or asthma nurse is important, so that you have a good understanding of your condition, and how to look after it.

Make sure you know what your medicines are, what they are for, and how to use your inhalers correctly.

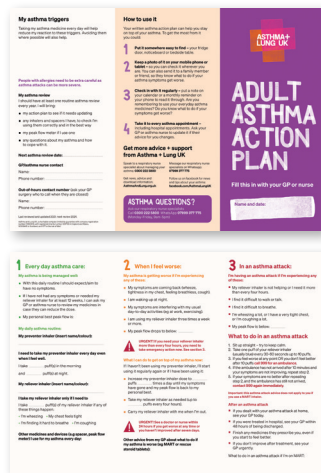
Visit your doctor or nurse at least once a year, even if you are well, to review your medicines.

Make a personal asthma action plan

Having a personal action plan is one of the most important things you can do to manage your asthma.

Consider making an action plan, you can use an app on your phone or make one in writing or use one of the templates available below.

Your plan should contain information about how to manage your symptoms, your asthma medicines, how to tell when your symptoms are getting worse and what you should do about it. The plans are available in multiple languages. Your doctor or nurse may be able to help you to complete it.



Scan the QR code to download an asthma action plan. Or you can download the Asthma Hub (England) app in the Apple Store or on Google Play. This app allows you to develop an asthma plan, access asthma education and store useful information like medication doses.



Taking your medication

It is important to take your medication as prescribed, even if you start to feel better. Taking your preventer medication every day will help keep your asthma under control and can help prevent asthma attacks. Ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist to check your inhaler technique, to make sure you're taking your medicines properly. If you have any questions or concerns about medication you're taking or side effects, talk to your doctor or nurse.



Regular reviews

Because asthma is a long-term condition, you'll be in contact with your doctor or asthma nurse regularly. You should see them at least once a year, or more regularly if you have just been diagnosed or if you've been unwell with your asthma. A good relationship with your doctor/nurse means you can easily discuss your symptoms, or concerns. Keep up to date with your appointments.

Hayfever and asthma triggers

People experience a wide variety of asthma triggers over time you will learn about what triggers your asthma and you should build this into your asthma plan.

If you are planning to travel, think ahead about extra precautions you may need to consider. If you are unsure what you may need ask your healthcare practitioner. If your travel is abroad ask if you will need any vaccinations.

Checking your peak flow

Keeping a peak flow diary can help you to keep track of your symptoms and notice if your asthma is changing.

Scan the QR code to watch a film about how to use a peak flow meter.



Be careful what you breathe

To reduce symptoms of asthma and chances of a flare-up, there are certain things that should be avoided if possible, these include:

- Dusty places
- Fumes, like car exhausts
- Smoke
- Air freshener, sprays or plug-ins
- Strong-smelling cleaning products, unless there is plenty of ventilation
- Hairspray
- Perfume



Take action and ask if your jabs are up to date

If you take inhaled or oral steroids to manage your asthma, you need flu and pneumonia vaccinations to reduce your chances of a serious respiratory illness. The flu and pneumonia jabs are available free from your doctor.

The flu jab is given every year from October. The pneumonia jab is a one-off jab that protects against certain types of pneumonia,

septicaemia (blood poisoning) and meningitis. You can have both jabs at the same time.

The shingles vaccine is currently available for those turning 65, those aged 70 to 79 and those aged 50 and over with a severely weakened immune system.



Check your painkillers

If you have asthma and you take aspirin or other painkillers, there's a very small chance that you'll have a bad reaction to the medication. Aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like ibuprofen, voltamol and naproxen have been shown to cause asthma attacks in about one in 10 adults with asthma.

If you think you have had, or are having an allergic reaction, or increased asthma symptoms after taking aspirin or any other NSAID, you should avoid all these types of medicines.



Your doctor or pharmacist will be able to advise you about alternative painkillers. If you have taken NSAIDs since being diagnosed with asthma and have not had an adverse reaction, they are probably safe for you. However, it is important to remember that people with asthma

sometimes find that their asthma triggers can change, so be mindful of worsening symptoms if you take these medicines. Remember that some cold and flu remedies may also contain NSAIDs. If this happens, stop taking the aspirin and seek advice from your doctor.

Take extra care in cold weather

Cold air is a major trigger of asthma symptoms, such as wheezing and shortness of breath. Be especially careful in winter. Wrap up warm when going outside and keep rescue inhalers with you.



Try to avoid cigarette smoke

Cigarette smoke is particularly bad for people with asthma. It's important to try to avoid smoky places, even second hand smoke can cause asthma symptoms.

Support to stop smoking

Quitting smoking is one of the best things that you can do for your health. Research has shown you are up to three times more likely to quit smoking if you use the support of your local Stop Smoking Service in addition to products such as patches or gum.

The Living Well Stop Smoking Service



This local service can support you with free confidential support to keep you motivated to quit.

When you use the service, you will get one-to-one support from a friendly

trained advisor who will create a 12 week personal quit plan designed with you, to work for you.

Scan the QR code to find out more or visit the Living Well website, or call 01274 437700.



The NHS Smoking Helpline can also offer advice and encouragement to help you quit smoking. Call 0300 123 1044.

Scan the QR code to visit the NHS smoke free website.



If you drink alcohol, drink within safe limits

DrinkCoach is a website where people can find information to make informed choices about alcohol with a quick confidential online quiz and free online coaching sessions.

Scan the QR code to find out more.



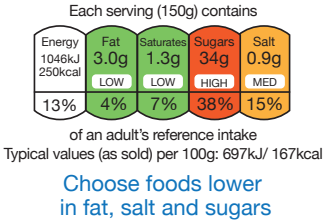
Scan this QR code for NHS alcohol info.

Eating well

A healthy balanced diet is important for good health. It should include high fibre foods like wholegrains, oats, beans, lentils, nuts, fruits, and vegetables, which are good for keeping your heart healthy and controlling blood pressure.



Check the label on packaged foods



Limiting salt to 6g (1 teaspoon) each day can also help to keep your blood pressure healthy. Look for the traffic-light colours on food packaging to limit foods that are high (red) in salt, sugar, and fat – these are sometimes called ‘ultra-processed’ foods and are not good for our health.

Beans, lentils, and nuts are good sources of protein, and oily fish like salmon, mackerel, pilchards, or tuna, can also help to protect against heart disease. Oily fish, as well as nuts, olive oil, and avocados contain good fats that are good for heart health, while high fat foods such as fatty meats, pies, sausages, and ghee, should be limited.



You can enjoy a balanced diet by making small, gradual changes that you can stick to. Choose unprocessed foods with less ingredients wherever possible to help fuel your body and protect your heart. Scan the QR for info about portions and food groups with the Eatwell Guide.

Swap Well to Eat Well

Please scan the QR code to find information about healthy eating with recipes and easy food swaps you can make on the Living Well website.



Staying active

Although exercise can be a trigger for some people, it's important to do as much as you can. Exercise can help your asthma, by improving your lung function and stamina. If exercise triggers your asthma it might help to take your reliever inhaler 20 mins beforehand.

Walking, swimming and cycling are all activities you can do, although chlorine can be a trigger for some people.

Interval based exercise rather than continuous is more manageable for some people, eg running/walking/ports where you can rest.

If exercise gives you asthma symptoms, discuss it with your doctor, as it means your asthma is not as well controlled as it could be. You may need more preventative treatments.

If you need support to get back into exercise, you may find a referral to BEEP useful.



Scan the QR code to find out about the benefits of walking and find guided and self guided walks in Bradford district.



Scan the QR code for a list of Bradford walks you can download and print.



Bradford Encouraging Exercise in People (BEEP)



BEEP is a free physical activity referral service that encourages people who are inactive, to become more active, with a 52 week support programme.

BEEP is also a great way for people living with long term health conditions to increase their physical activity levels safely and improve their health. A trained exercise referral officer will work with you to design a bespoke exercise training programme created specifically for you.



Ask at your local GP practice for a referral to the BEEP service. Your GP, nurse or any other health care professional can complete a referral form for you.

Scan the QR code or visit the Living Well website to find out more.

Asthma attacks

Asthma attacks don't usually come out of the blue, but are the result of gradually worsening symptoms. If your asthma symptoms are getting worse, don't ignore them.

Sometimes, no matter how careful you are in taking your medicines and avoiding triggers, you may have an attack.

Scan the QR code to find NHS information.



Is it an asthma attack?

You can tell you're having an asthma attack if:

- Your reliever inhaler isn't helping
- You have to keep using your reliever inhaler as the effect wears off quickly
- Your symptoms are getting worse
- You're too breathless to speak, eat or sleep

Often, using your reliever inhaler will be enough to relieve your symptoms when you start having an attack.

Sometimes, symptoms are more severe and urgent action is needed.

Read on to find out what to do when you have an attack.

What to do if you are having an asthma attack

Asthma attack advice for a blue reliever inhaler

1. Sit up - try to keep calm.
2. Take one puff of your blue reliever inhaler every 30-60 seconds up to 10 puffs. Shake the inhaler between each puff. If you have an AIR or MART inhaler, take 1 puff every 1 to 3 minutes until you feel better, up to a maximum of 6 puffs.
3. If you feel worse at any point OR you don't feel better after 10 puffs, call 999 for an ambulance.
4. If the ambulance has not arrived after 10 minutes and your symptoms are not improving, repeat step 2.
5. If your symptoms are no better after repeating step 2, and the ambulance has still not arrived, contact 999 again immediately.



Please scan the QR code to watch a video on what to do if you have a blue inhaler

If you do not have your reliever inhaler, and you're struggling to breathe, call 999 straight away.

Do not wait to see if you get better on your own. An asthma attack makes it hard to breathe, which is a medical emergency. You must get the reliever treatment you need quickly.

1. Sit up and try to stay calm.
2. Call 999 for an ambulance.
3. Tell the call handler that you do not have a reliever inhaler with you.

If your symptoms improve and you do not need to call 999, you still need to see a doctor or asthma nurse within 24 hours.

Helping someone who is having an asthma attack

Someone who is having an asthma attack may feel distressed and anxious. Try to reassure them and help them stay as calm as possible.

Call 999 straight away if they do not have a reliever inhaler with them.

1. Help them to sit up in a comfortable position.
2. Help them to use their reliever inhaler, following our asthma attack guidance.
3. Call 999 if they do not feel better, or if you are worried at any point.

Important: this asthma attack advice does not apply to you if you use a MART inhaler.



Scan the QR code to find more information and advice about the MART regime

What to do after having an asthma attack

Call your GP surgery and tell them you need an appointment after having an asthma attack. Even if you're feeling better, you still need an appointment. Your GP/nurse can help you lower the risk of another attack.

If you managed your attack yourself using your reliever inhaler, ask for an urgent, same-day appointment with your GP/nurse. If you were treated in hospital, or by ambulance paramedics you need a follow-up appointment no later than two working days after treatment for your attack.

It can sometimes be hard to get a GP appointment. Tell the receptionist that asthma guidelines recommend an urgent appointment to lower your risk of another attack.

Scan the QR code to find NHS information about asthma attacks.





Healthy Minds is your first step to mental health support in Bradford District and Craven

www.healthyminds.services



Work and benefits

If you're not well enough to do your usual work it's important to talk to your employer as soon as possible to try and find a solution that suits you both. For example, it may be possible for you to work part-time.

Asthma is classed as a disability if it has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal daily activities.

The Equality Act 2010 requires employers to make reasonable adjustments to working practices or premises to help a person with a disability.

Call Disability Advice Bradford: 01274 594 173. (Mon & Tues mornings)



Scan the QR code
for benefits advice
from the Citizens
Advice Bureau, or
call 0844 245 1282

Scan the QR code
for benefits and
welfare advice
on the Bradford
Council website



Scan the QR code
for a benefits
check with the
Jobcentre Plus

Scan the QR code
for information
about benefit
calculators



Where to find support

Find out which services may be available to you. Even if you don't need them now, they may be useful in the future. By using the services that you are entitled to you can ensure that those closest to you don't have to take on all the responsibility for helping you.

Find out what services can be arranged through your doctor or consultant. Living Well advisors or social prescribers may also be able to help you get support.

Living Well

Supporting people in Bradford district to live healthier, more active lives. Call: 01274 438884.



Living Well Quick Links:

Advisor Service



Free, friendly advice and non-judgemental support for anyone needing a little

extra help to start making lifestyle changes. Where to start, what to do next, and signposting to other useful resources and services.

Stop Smoking Service



Free confidential 1:1 support to motivate people to quit smoking with a wide

range of options to help combat cravings, including free 12 week vaping kits and prescribed NRT medications.

Weight Management Support



12 weeks free access to weight management groups including Slimming World,

APNA Healthy Living and The Brotherhood supporting people to lose weight in a healthy way. (New members only. Offers subject to change).

BEEP Exercise Referral Service



A free physical activity referral service encouraging people who

are inactive, to become more active with a 52 week support programme. Also a great option for people living with a long term health condition.



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The wording in this leaflet can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille.

Please call 01274 438884.

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