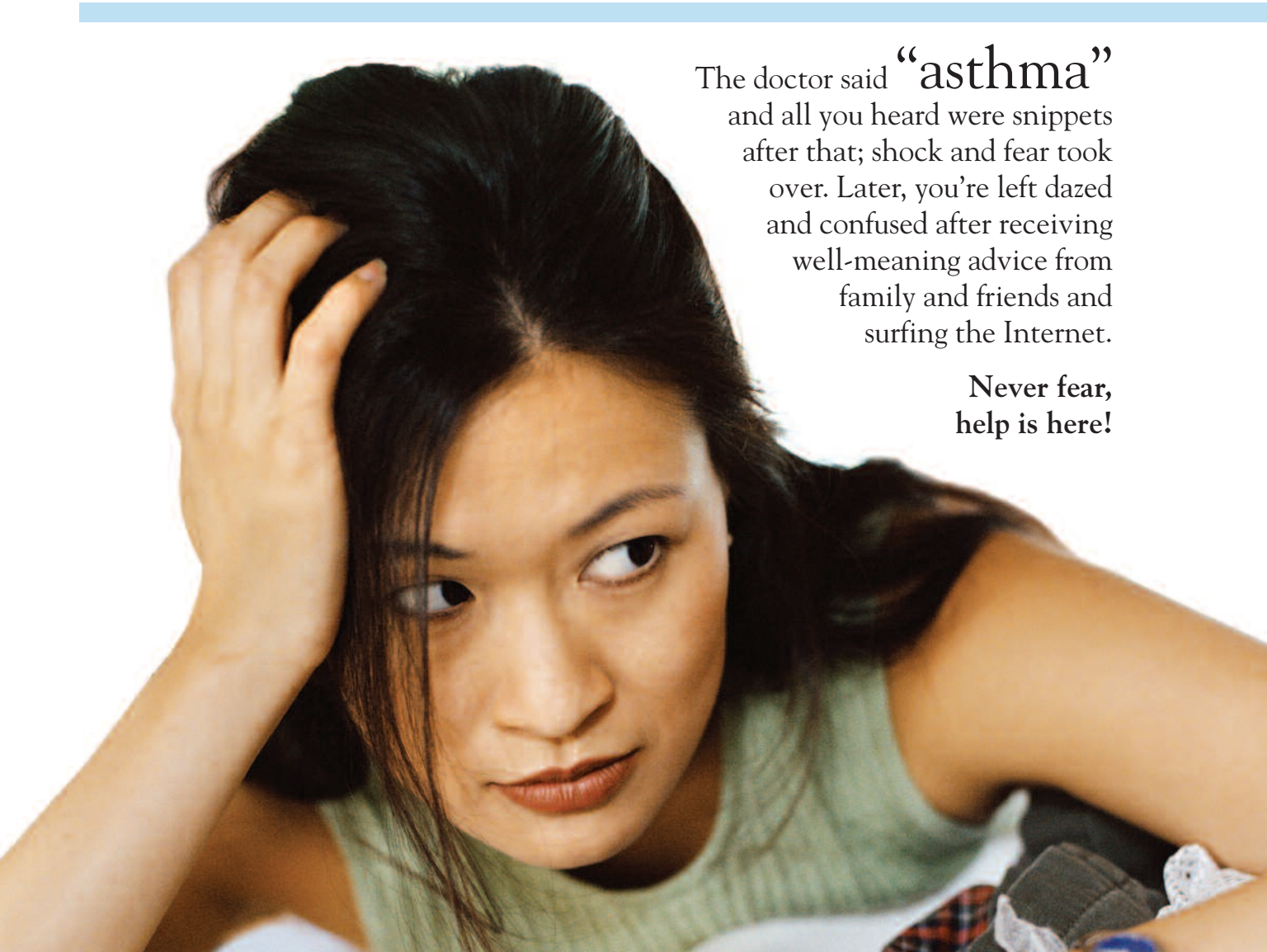


Newly Diagnosed?

Six Steps From Confused to Confident



The doctor said “asthma” and all you heard were snippets after that; shock and fear took over. Later, you’re left dazed and confused after receiving well-meaning advice from family and friends and surfing the Internet.

**Never fear,
help is here!**

1

Make Sure It's Asthma

Everything that coughs or wheezes isn't asthma, so confirm the diagnosis with a board-certified allergist who will:

- Take a detailed history of symptoms
- Complete a thorough physical exam
- Measure lung function using spirometry
- Confirm that symptoms respond to a quick-relief bronchodilator (albuterol or levalbuterol)
- Measure exhaled nitric oxide (eNo), an indicator of airway inflammation



A spirometer measures how well your lungs are working.

- Test for allergies and other co-existing conditions such as sinusitis or GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease)

If your healthcare provider did all these tests but you're still not convinced it's asthma, follow the medication instructions you received and continue going to scheduled follow-up appointments. Give the treatment plan a chance. If it's not asthma, symptoms will not improve despite your best efforts and it will be time for more tests or a second opinion.



Measuring exhaled nitric oxide assesses airway inflammation.

2

Follow YOUR Customized Asthma Action Plan

What? You don't have one? Call 800.878.4403 or e-mail editor@aanma.org today for our free asthma action plan template. Ask your healthcare provider to fill it out. This is a guide for preventing as well as treating symptoms, so follow it closely. Take inhaled corticosteroids daily (if prescribed) to control airway inflammation and reduce exposure to allergens and irritants (like second-hand smoke) that make asthma worse.

Allergy & Asthma Network 800.878.4403
 Members of *Wheezers* www.aanma.org

ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

DOING WELL
 If you're doing well, use your inhaler as directed. If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed. If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed.

SYMPTOMS PRESENT
 If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed. If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed.

MEDICAL ALERT!
 If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed. If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed.

EXERCISE
 If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed. If you have symptoms, use your inhaler as directed.

3

Play Detective

Takes less than three minutes, twice a day, but reveals so much! A daily symptom diary such as AANMA's AsthmaTracker™ helps monitor how your asthma action plan is working. Review the diary with your healthcare provider and together, you can uncover trends and possible hidden causes of symptoms. Learn to recognize warning signs of worsening asthma, especially for small children who can't communicate what they're feeling.

Every person is different, even in the same family!

The AsthmaTracker form includes a header for patient information (Name, Physician, Phone) and a grid for tracking symptoms (Cough, Wheezing, Shortness of Breath, Chest Tightness, Sneeze, Runny Nose, Itchy Throat, Itchy Ears, Itchy Eyes, Itchy Skin, Itchy Hair, Itchy Scalp, Itchy Eyelids, Itchy Lips, Itchy Mouth, Itchy Throat, Itchy Stomach, Itchy Anus, Itchy Vagina, Itchy Penis, Itchy Testicles, Itchy Scrotum, Itchy Groin, Itchy Buttocks, Itchy Feet, Itchy Hands, Itchy Fingers, Itchy Nails, Itchy Hair, Itchy Scalp, Itchy Eyelids, Itchy Lips, Itchy Mouth, Itchy Throat, Itchy Stomach, Itchy Anus, Itchy Vagina, Itchy Penis, Itchy Testicles, Itchy Scrotum, Itchy Groin, Itchy Buttocks, Itchy Feet, Itchy Hands, Itchy Fingers, Itchy Nails) over a 30-day period. It also includes a section for 'How many inhaler puffs used?' and 'How many rescue inhaler puffs used?'.

Order AANMA's AsthmaTracker at aanma.org/aanma-store or call 800.878.4403.

4

Be Inhaler Savvy

Inhalers don't treat or prevent symptoms any more than a can of paint colors the wall. It's what's inside that counts – and knowing how to use the inhaler correctly to draw the medication deep into your airways.

Read the patient instructions that came with your inhaler. Learn how often to prime it and clean it. For most metered-dose inhalers (MDIs), follow these steps:

- (1) stand or sit tall
- (2) shake the inhaler vigorously for a few seconds

- (3) remove the cap (and insert the inhaler mouthpiece into your valved holding chamber, if you have one)
- (4) take a deep breath in, let it all the way out, then put the inhaler (or holding chamber mouthpiece) into your mouth, close your lips around it, begin a slow inhalation and activate the inhaler at the same time
- (5) continue inhaling slow and steady for 3-4 seconds
- (6) hold your breath for 10 seconds or so; take the inhaler out of your mouth, let your breath out slowly
- (7) wait one minute before repeating instructions for the second dose



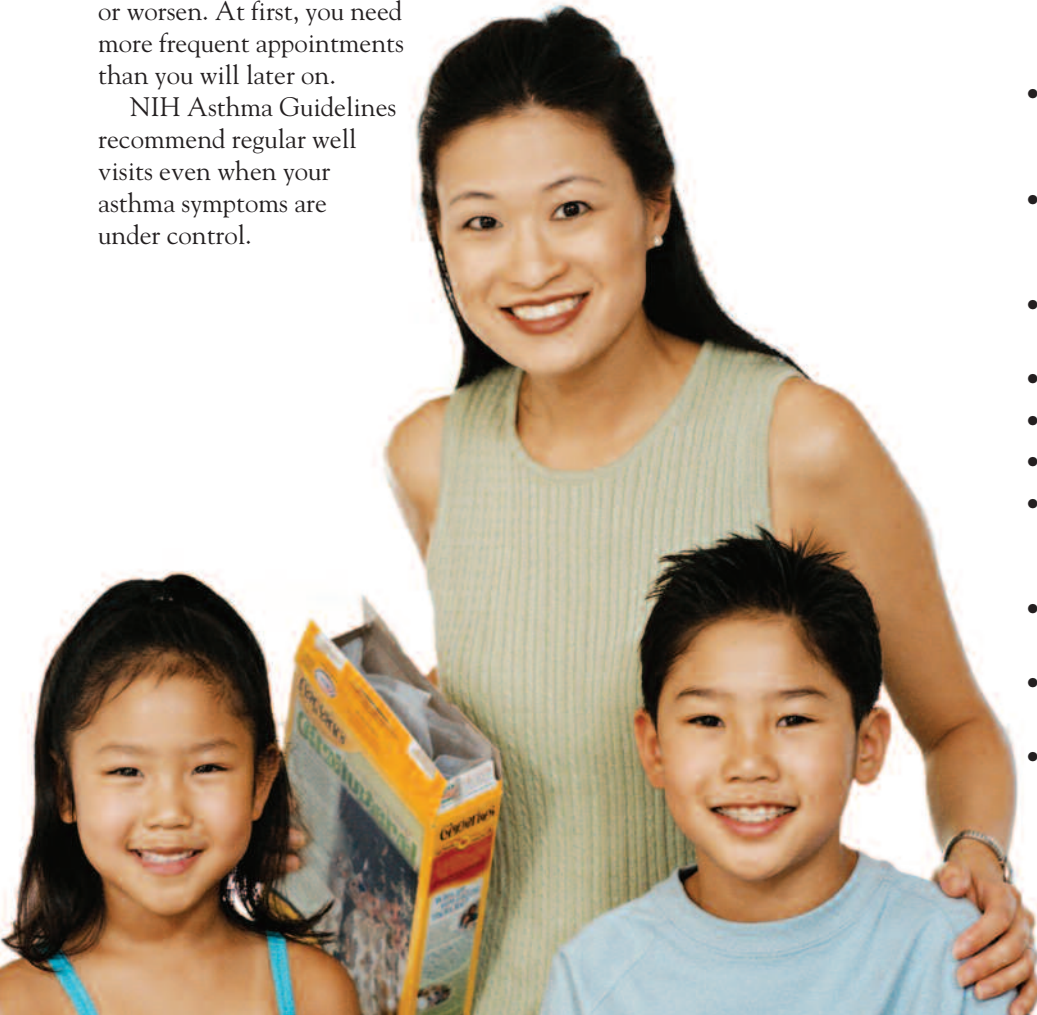
Quick-relief bronchodilators treat the wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath symptoms of asthma. Pictured here (left to right) ProAir, Proventil, Ventolin and Xopenex.

5

Keep your follow-up appointments – especially if things are progressing nicely!

Your asthma action plan will change as your symptoms improve or worsen. At first, you need more frequent appointments than you will later on.

NIH Asthma Guidelines recommend regular well visits even when your asthma symptoms are under control.



6

At Your Service

- Allergy & Asthma Network Mothers of Asthmatics (AANMA): 800.878.4403; aanma.org
- AANMA Patient Support Center: 800.878.4403; aanmahelp@aanma.org
- The Great American Asthma Challenge: GreatAmericanAsthmaChallenge.org
- AANMA's Indoor AirRepair at Home, School and Play kit: aanma.org/publication
- Take A Weekly Breather: aanmablog.blogspot.com
- [Facebook.com/AANMA](https://www.facebook.com/AANMA)
- [Twitter.com/AANMA](https://twitter.com/AANMA)
- E-mail alerts: editor@aanma.org
- NIH Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma: nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: cdc.gov/asthma
- Environmental Protection Agency: epa.gov/asthma
- American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (ACAAI): allergyandasthmarelief.org