



# ASTHMA IN DISGUISE

## SPRING ASTHMA CHECKLIST

The spring season can often bring additional challenges for people with asthma. Follow our checklist to better manage your asthma and allergies this spring.

### SPRING ASTHMA TIPS

#### Be aware of high pollen days

If you experience hay fever and/or pollen is a trigger for your asthma, it is important to be aware of when high levels of pollen are present in the air. People with asthma and hay fever should monitor relevant apps and websites over spring including AusPollen and AirRater.

On high pollen days, close your windows and doors. If you have an air conditioner, make sure it is turned to 'circulate' so it doesn't bring the outdoor pollens inside.

#### Treat your hay fever symptoms

Managing hay fever is an important part of overall asthma care as hay fever can make asthma worse and more difficult to control. Treatment of hay fever depends on the severity and frequency of your hay fever symptoms.

##### Treatment options include:

- Antihistamines
- Saline sprays/irrigations
- Corticosteroid nasal sprays
- Decongestants

Speak to your doctor or pharmacists about the best treatment for your hay fever.

#### Manage your risk of thunderstorm asthma

##### If you are at an increased risk of thunderstorm asthma:

- Understand the Epidemic Thunderstorm Asthma phenomenon.
- Have a written Asthma Action Plan (where advised by your doctor) and/or have practical knowledge of the four steps of Asthma First Aid.
- Have reliever medication available in grass pollen season and be aware of how to use it (ideally with a spacer).
- Be alert to and act on the development of asthma symptoms as explained in your written Asthma Action Plan if you have one, or if you don't, use Asthma First Aid.

- Be aware of thunderstorm forecasts particularly on HIGH or EXTREME pollen count days. Where possible avoid being outside during thunderstorms during the grass pollen season – especially in the wind gusts that come before the storm. Go inside and close your doors and windows and if you have your air conditioner on, turn it to recirculate.
- Never ignore asthma symptoms like breathlessness, wheezing and tightness in the chest. Start Asthma First Aid immediately and call Triple Zero "000" for help if symptoms do not get any better or if they start to get worse.

#### Low allergen gardens

Gardens can harbor allergens that can trigger asthma, hay fever and allergy symptoms.

##### Some top tips to reduce the impact of gardening on your asthma (alongside good asthma management) include:

- Choosing Australian native plants and brightly coloured, large flowering plants that are pollinated by birds/insects rather than wind, as they don't release pollen into the air.
- Avoiding plants with strong fragrances or odour (e.g. jasmines), especially planted next to entrances or windows. Exceptions include roses.
- Choosing native or slow-growing, low or no pollen grass that does not require frequent mowing
- Using inorganic mulches such as pebbles or gravel to reduce weeds and mould spores
- Weeding the garden often to avoid them flowering or seeding
- Avoiding compost heaps
- Avoiding gardening on windy days when pollen may be airborne



**ASTHMA  
AUSTRALIA**



# Are your **SPRING ALLERGIES** disguising something **MORE?**

## BE PREPARED FOR SPRING

Good asthma management year-round is the key to ensuring you are ready for spring.

### Visit your doctor for an asthma review

Visit your doctor every six - 12 months for an asthma review

#### With your doctor:

- assess your current level of asthma control
- make sure you are on the right medicines to manage your asthma (e.g. a preventer)
- check your inhaler technique
- ensure your Asthma Action Plan is up-to-date
- ask about your asthma, your treatment and how to stay healthy during winter

### Get a written Asthma Action Plan

An Asthma Action Plan is something developed with a doctor to help provide clear instructions on what to do when experiencing asthma symptoms or during an asthma flare-up and should include instructions about managing asthma alongside identified triggers.

With your doctor, develop or update your written Asthma Action Plan.

#### Follow a written asthma action plan for:

- a better controlled asthma
- fewer asthma flare-ups
- fewer days off work or school
- reduced reliever medication use
- fewer hospital visits

### Take the Asthma Control Test

If you have experienced any of the following in the last four weeks it indicates your asthma may not be under control.

- Daytime asthma symptoms more than two days per week
- Need for reliever more than two days per week
- Any limitation on activities due to asthma symptoms
- Any asthma symptoms during the night or on waking

Visit [asthma.org.au/asthma-control-test](http://asthma.org.au/asthma-control-test) to get your Asthma Score.

### Preventer - every day, even when well

Preventers work to reduce the inflammation in the airways. Regular use of your preventer makes the airways less sensitive, which reduces the frequency and severity of asthma symptoms (reducing the need for your reliever medication) and the risk of future flare-ups. Daily use of a preventer is key to keeping well.

### Check your device technique

Up to 90% of people are thought to use their inhalers incorrectly, which means the dose of medicine isn't getting into the lungs where it's needed. Ask your doctor or pharmacist to check you are using your inhaler medication device correctly.

### Learn the steps of Asthma First Aid

The Asthma First Aid app is your go-to tool for an asthma emergency. It covers both first aid in the event of an asthma emergency plus the ability to review each of the four first aid steps. Download the Asthma First Aid app from the App Store or Google Play.

### For more information call

**1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462)**

or visit [asthma.org.au/asthmaindisguise](http://asthma.org.au/asthmaindisguise)

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