

KEY EDUCATIONAL MESSAGES:
“Teach and reinforce at every opportunity”
(EPR-3 Summary Report page 18)

Basic Facts About Asthma

- The contrast between airways of a person who has and a person who does not have asthma; the role of inflammation.
- What happens to the airways during an asthma episode?

Role of Medications- Understanding the Difference Between:

- Long-term control medications: prevent symptoms, often by reducing inflammation. Must be taken daily. Do not expect them to give quick relief.
- Quick-relief medications: SABAs relax airway muscles to provide prompt relief of symptoms. Do not expect them to provide long-term asthma control. Using SABA >2 days/ week indicates the need for starting or increasing long-term control medications.

Patient Skills

- Taking medications correctly
 - Inhaler technique (demonstrate to the patient and have the patient return the demonstration).
 - Use of devices, as prescribed (e.g., valved-holding chamber (VHC) or spacer; nebulizer; MDI vs DPI).
- Identifying and avoiding environmental exposures that worsen the patient’s asthma; e.g., allergens, irritants, tobacco smoke.
- Self-monitoring
 - Assess level of asthma control.
 - Monitor symptoms and, if prescribed, PEF measures.
 - Recognize early signs and symptoms of worsening asthma.
- Using a written asthma action plan to know when and how to:
 - Take daily actions to control asthma.
 - Adjust medication in response to signs of worsening asthma.
 - Seeking medical care as appropriate.