

# Managing your asthma during the coronavirus outbreak

An educational resource for people with asthma, developed by Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Europe Ltd.

Taking the right steps to help ensure your asthma is well controlled is always important, and during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak you should continue to manage your asthma well to help reduce your risk from the virus. This short guide summarises the key things to remember, and answers some of the questions you may have.

What does COVID-19 mean for someone with asthma?<sup>1,2</sup>

The Government has released guidelines for people who would be at very high risk if they catch coronavirus, including those with severe asthma. You can view those guidelines [here](#). Most people whose asthma is well controlled do not appear to have an increased risk of catching coronavirus or of developing complications from the virus.<sup>2</sup> The best way to stay healthy is to ensure your asthma is as stable as possible.<sup>1,2</sup> This means:



Taking your preventer medication regularly as prescribed for you in your personal asthma action plan



Having a reliever inhaler to use if your asthma symptoms worsen

A good inhaler technique is very important – if you haven't checked yours recently, you can refresh your memory [here](#).

## Here are other things you can do to manage your asthma well and help protect yourself against coronavirus:<sup>3</sup>



Download an asthma action plan and use it every day.



Start a peak flow diary, if you have a peak flow meter (if you don't have one, think about getting one from your GP or pharmacist). Peak flow meters help you track your asthma and also help your medical team to assess you over the phone or video).



If you get a cold, flu or any other respiratory infection, you can find advice on taking care of your asthma [here](#).



If you smoke, it's vital to quit now. Smoking will increase your risk from coronavirus. See the NHS advice on quitting [here](#).

If you have **severe asthma**, the government advice is to practise shielding, which means not leaving your home, and while at home minimise all non-essential contact with other members of your household.<sup>1</sup>

**IMPORTANT: The advice given in this guide is the most up to date at the time of writing, but we advise you to check NHS and government advice regularly for any updates.**

What should you do to ensure you can keep taking your regular medication?<sup>2</sup>

Make sure you order your asthma medications before running out, so you have enough supply with you at home. You **don't** need to over-order or stock up on your inhalers. Remember never to share them with family or friends, as your prescription is uniquely suited to you.

What should you do if your asthma gets worse while shielding at home?<sup>3</sup>

If your asthma gets worse and you **don't** have symptoms of coronavirus, make an urgent appointment with your GP. They may ask to speak to you by phone or video. If you have an asthma attack, follow the steps on your asthma action plan. If you need to, call 999 for an ambulance.

If your asthma is getting worse and you **do** have symptoms of coronavirus, don't go to your GP surgery. Instead, use the 111 online service or call 111. Let them know you have asthma and you're getting symptoms, and follow their advice.

What should you do if you develop coronavirus symptoms?<sup>3</sup>

If you get symptoms of coronavirus, use the NHS 111 online coronavirus service or call 111 **as soon as you get symptoms**. You should not wait for the symptoms to get worse.



## Remember...



Stay home



Protect the NHS



Save lives

## You are not alone

It can be a worrying time for everyone at the moment, and it's important to look after your mental wellbeing too. Being stressed or anxious can make your asthma worse,<sup>3</sup> so do make use of the advice and support that's available. You can find useful tips for coping with stress and anxiety [here](#) and [here](#).

## Stay at home

In these challenging times, we all have to make difficult changes to our everyday lives. You can read the latest NHS advice on staying at home and social distancing [here](#).

## References:

**1.** GOV.uk. Guidance on shielding and protecting people defined on medical grounds as extremely vulnerable from COVID-19. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/>. Last accessed: May 2021. **2.** British Thoracic Society. BTS Advice for Healthcare Professionals treating patients with asthma. Available at: <https://www.brit-thoracic.org.uk/about-us/covid-19-information-for-the-respiratory-community/>. Last accessed: May 2021. **3.** Asthma UK. Coronavirus (COVID-19). Available at: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/coronavirus/>. Last accessed: May 2021.