

Poorly controlled asthma in adults or teenagers – protocol WM-AHSN-03

Purpose

- To support the shared management plan agreed with the GP practice team, empowering the patient to be less dependent on face to face clinical contacts.
- To improve compliance with use of inhalers.
- To help the patient understand how to manage their asthma
- To help the patient adopt a healthier lifestyle – encourage exercise, stop smoking.
- To offer simple approaches to self-management.

Setting:

General practice setting; but could be other setting if a clinician takes responsibility

Selection of patients

- Patients who are newly diagnosed with asthma, or who have poor control of their asthma.
- Patients who in addition have poor lifestyle habits

Expected outcomes

1) Changes in healthcare usage:

- Fewer unnecessary admissions to hospital or attendances at A&E; less face to face contact at GP surgery.
- Reduction in number of prescriptions for reliever inhalers; optimise number of prescriptions for reliever inhalers.

2) Improved clinical outcomes:

- Adherence to best practice guidelines concerning use of preventer inhalers.

Success criteria

- 50% of participants use their preventer inhalers to maintain their asthma control within agreed levels of peak flow readings.

Protocol summary (8 weeks):

- The patient agrees to a shared management plan, and is given a copy
- Patient issued with a peak flow meter, if they do not already have one
- Daily - the patient is asked to take/submit their peak flow reading
- Twice weekly - the patient is asked about their use of reliever inhaler
- Fortnightly - the patient is asked if they are taking exercise
- Fortnightly - the patient is asked which inhaler they use most
- Twice weekly - the patient receives information messages
- Monthly text enquiry of patient experience starting at baseline

NB The doctor / nurse needs to choose an appropriate protocol based on the patient's best peak flow reading, and the protocols are listed WM-AHSN-03a-j, each with a different maximum peak flow. This enables appropriate messages to be sent to the patient according to their daily reading which is a percentage of their maximum peak flow. The advice given to patients is based on *British Guideline on the Management of Asthma 101 (SIGN) revised 2012*.

Because of the number of alternative messages needed for this protocol, some 'normal' readings for peak flow will trigger an alert. It will be clear from looking at the patient record that these alerts can be ignored.

Daily peak flow question

Daily at 9:30am

(although the patient can send a reading in at any time without waiting for the message):

What is your peak flow today? Please reply PF followed by the reading, e.g.. PF 340

(75-100%) : *your peak flow is in the green zone today, that's great*

(61-75%) : *your peak flow is in the amber zone today, Please refer to your action plan*

(41- 60%): *Your symptoms are worsening + you have poor control - you need an urgent medical review today & take 6-10 puffs of reliever every 4 hours through your spacer*

(40%): *Your peak flow is very low. SEEK EMERGENCY HELP as pre-agreed in your action plan.*

Twice weekly question about use of reliever inhaler

6:00pm: 'How many times have you needed your blue inhaler over the past 3 days? Please reply REL followed by the number of times. Thanks, Flo'

0-1 : That's good. Your asthma seems well controlled. Flo.

Great, when your asthma is well controlled, you should only need to use your blue inhaler occasionally. Take care, Flo.

2- 3: That's a bit more often than we'd like. Please give your nurse a call within the next 48 hours.

Thanks, Flo

Your asthma really should be better controlled. Have a chat with your practice nurse.. Take care, Flo

≥4 : That's rather often. Please give your nurse a call within the next 1-2 days or please seek a review by your doctor/nurse. Thanks, Flo.

Your asthma is not well controlled. Contact your nurse or doctor urgently. They can give you advice to help prevent your asthma becoming more severe. Take care,

Fortnightly question about exercise

5:00pm *Are you getting plenty of exercise? Please reply EXE 1 if you are, or EXE 2 if you aren't.*

Thanks, Flo

Yes Good, asthma should not interfere with a healthy lifestyle. Take care, Flo.

Sport is a good way to exercise, as it's more fun than just exercising on your own. Take care, Flo.

Exercise improves your circulation, your joint flexibility, your muscle and bone strength – and your lungs. So it's great that you're keeping fit. Take care, Flo.

Exercise builds your confidence in managing your asthma, so doing it regularly will help you with your breathing. Take care, Flo.

No Asthma shouldn't stop you exercising; if it does see your asthma nurse. Take care, Flo.

Even if you don't really like exercise, it's good to keep fit by doing activities like walking 3-5 times a week. Take care, Flo.

Exercise helps with your breathing, because the more you do, the better your circulation and efficiency of your muscles, so you don't get so short of breath. Flo.

You can count short sessions of activity towards your daily total, so going up a flight of stairs several times a day could be half of your daily exercise goal. Take care, Flo.

Fortnightly question about inhaler used

5.30pm Which inhaler do you use most? Please reply INH1 = preventer inhaler; INH2 = blue reliever. Thanks, Flo.

Preventer:

Great, your preventer keeps asthma under good control. Take care, Flo

It's your preventer that controls your asthma, and it's really good that you are using this the most. Take care, Flo.

You're doing well. Using your preventer inhaler helps to stop your asthma progressing to a less controlled, emergency situation. Take care, Flo.

Good. Using your preventer inhaler means that you are in control of your asthma, rather than having to rely on the blue inhaler to help you out of difficulties.

Blue:

Please see your asthma nurse in the next month. Take care, Flo.

You are relying on your blue inhaler to regain control of your asthma. Please see your asthma nurse in the next month to help you stay in control. Take care, Flo.

It would be better to prevent asthma attacks. Please see your asthma nurse in the next month, to help with your preventer inhaler. Take care, Flo.

Using your preventer inhaler regularly would be a better way of managing your asthma. Please see your practice nurse in the next month for help. Take care, Flo.

Information messages (twice weekly for 8 weeks)

There could be more you can do to improve your asthma – avoid smoky places, spot allergies early, do regular exercise. Take care, Flo

If there's anything you want to know about your asthma, ask your doctor or nurse to spend time explaining it. Take care, Flo

We are trying to help you get as good a control of your asthma as is possible; but don't expect a 'cure'. Take care, Flo

Prevention is key – so take your preventer inhaler treatment regularly and avoid triggers – like pets, long grasses, perfume, plants, smoky places. Take care, Flo

You can do it – be the main person who controls your own asthma. Not your doctor or nurse – it's you. Take care, Flo

Check with the pharmacist if you're buying over the counter medicines – ibuprofen or cough medicines could make your asthma worse. Take care, Flo

Don't forget your local pharmacist has good advice about coping with colds, cough and hayfever. Some can advise you on inhaler technique too. Take care, Flo

If you or anyone close to you smokes – get help from your GP or pharmacist for the final time before you or they quit forever. Take care, Flo

Control your asthma by increasing your inhalers when you start to be more short of breath. Then step back to normal. Take care, Flo

How do you know that your asthma control is as good as it can get? Agree success targets with your doctor or nurse. Take care, Flo

Try to fit in regular exercise – as much as is comfortable every day. Take care, Flo

Did you know that doctors think that three-quarters of admissions to hospital for asthma are avoidable– if people had used their inhalers properly? Take care, Flo

Eating healthy foods will help you fight off infections. Take care, Flo

Do you know where to go if you need help urgently at night or weekends for your asthma? Phone or visit a walk in centre or Out of Hours service rather than A&E. Keep their phone numbers to hand. Take care, Flo

Try to avoid catching a cold; wash your hands frequently as cold viruses are picked up on your hands then spread to your nose or eyes. Take care, Flo

If you've got a persistent cough this may indicate poor control of your asthma- so go for a review with your doctor or nurse. Take care, Flo

If you've got a cough from a head cold, use an extra pillow at night, so less secretions will drip down the back of your throat. Take care, Flo

Your doctor or nurse will help you step down your inhalers to maintain you at the lowest treatment to achieve control of your symptoms. Take care, Flo

Every 4 weeks

Make sure you have a reliever inhaler at school or work in case you need it.

**Patient experience questions
(monthly at 7.30pm)**

BASELINE (xEvalQ-01/-02 & -07)

How often do you miss taking your preventer inhaler per week? Please text CC1 if once or twice; CC2 if 3-4 times; CC3 if more than this. Thanks, Flo

Do you think that you have good asthma control? Reply CC1 for yes; CC2 for no; CC3 for unsure. Thanks, Flo.

Do you think Flo will help your asthma control? Please reply CC1 if yes, CC2 if no, or CC3 if unsure. Thanks, Flo.

Thank you

END OF MONTHS 1 & 2 (xEvalQ-03/-04 &-05/-06)

How often do you miss taking your preventer inhaler per week? Please text CC1 if once or twice;

CC2 if 3-4 times; CC3 if more than this. Thanks, Flo

Has Flo helped your asthma control? If yes, please reply CC1; if no, reply CC2; if unsure, text CC3

Thank you. This information helps us to know how useful the Flo system is.