

BETTER HEALTH 4 YOU

SMART LOCAL 36 BENEFIT FUND

ASTHMA, ALLERGIES & COPD

Asthma: Limit asthma attacks caused by colds or flu

A cold or the flu can trigger an asthma attack. Here's why — and how to keep your sneeze from turning into a wheeze.

If you have asthma, even a mild cold can lead to wheezing and tightness in your chest. Colds and the flu are among the most common causes of asthma flare-ups, especially in young children.

Regular asthma medications may fail to relieve asthma symptoms associated with a cold or the flu. Also, asthma symptoms caused by a respiratory infection may last for several days to weeks.

There's no sure way to keep yourself or your child from getting a cold or the flu. But taking steps to avoid getting sick — and taking the right steps when you do — can help.

Preventing colds and the flu

Take these steps to help avoid getting sick:

- **Get an annual flu vaccine unless your doctor recommends against it. Most adults and children older than 6 months of age should get a flu vaccination every year.**
- **Ask your doctor if you need a pneumonia vaccination. Having asthma increases your risk of developing pneumonia after getting the flu.**
- **Avoid contact with anyone who's sick. Germs that cause respiratory infections are easily passed from person to person.**
- **Wash your hands often. This kills the germs that can cause respiratory infections. Carry a bottle of hand sanitizer to kill germs while you're on the go.**
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. These are the points where germs enter your body.**

Chicken

Noodle Soup

1 TBS butter
½ cup each onion & celery, chopped
4 cans chicken broth (14.5 oz. each)
1 can veg. broth
½ cup chopped chicken, cooked
1 ½ cup egg noodles
1 cup sliced carrots
½ tsp. each basil & oregano

In a large pot melt butter. Cook onion and celery until tender. Pour in chicken and vegetable broths and stir in chicken, noodles, carrots, basil, oregano, salt & pepper. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer 20 minutes before serving.

6 Servings

- Do not share your inhaler or other breathing equipment with others. Germs can spread on surfaces.



What to do when you do get a cold or the flu

Despite your best intentions to stay healthy, an occasional cold or case of the flu is inevitable — especially in children. These steps may help:

- Call your doctor if your asthma begins to flare up when you're sick. If you have the flu, early treatment with an antiviral medication or other prescription drug may help ease symptoms and
- help you recover more quickly.
- Follow your asthma action plan. If you notice warning signs of an asthma attack — such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness or shortness of breath — adjust your medication as directed by your written asthma action plan. (If you don't have an asthma action plan, talk to your doctor about making one.)
- Rest and take care of yourself. Rest and drink plenty of fluids. With your doctor's OK, use over-the-counter cold or flu remedies to relieve your symptoms. These medications won't help you get over the cold or flu faster, but they can help you feel better in the meantime.
- Monitor your airflow. Use a peak flow meter to monitor how well your lungs are working from day to day. Take your readings at the same time every day. If you notice a drop in your peak flow rate, adjust your medication as directed by your doctor.
- Seek help right away for severe symptoms. Seek treatment if you have severe breathing trouble or if your throat is

- extremely sore. Also get medical attention if you have any signs or symptoms of pneumonia, such as a high fever, chills, sweats, sharp pain when taking deep breaths or a cough that brings up colored phlegm.
- Stay home. If you do get sick, stay home from school or work to avoid infecting others. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Generally, you can infect others a day before your symptoms appear and for up to a week or so afterward.



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Call me anytime with questions

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