

Asthma Medicines

Asthma makes two main things happen in the airways of your lungs—

- **Swelling**—Your airways become inflamed. They swell up and fill with mucus.
- **Tightness**—The muscles around the airways tighten and make the airways narrow.

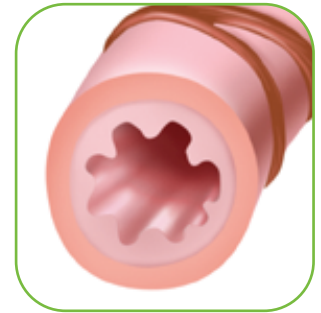
Asthma Is Treated With Two Kinds of Medicines: Controller Medicines and Quick-Relief (Rescue) Medicines

Controller Medicines

- Controller medicines help prevent asthma symptoms. They help prevent or reduce the swelling and tightness in your airways.
- The most effective, long-term controller medicine is an inhaled corticosteroid. Other long-term controller medicines include inhaled long-acting beta-agonists in combination with an inhaled corticosteroid, leukotriene modifiers, cromolyn/nedocromil, oral corticosteroids, and theophylline.
- Use your controller medicine each day—as directed by your doctor—even when you feel fine.

Quick-Relief (Rescue) Medicines

- These medicines, used on an “as needed” basis, act quickly to relax the muscles around your airways. Your airways will open up and help you breathe better fast.
- Short-acting inhaled beta-agonists are the preferred quick-relief medicine. Other quick-relief medicines include inhaled anticholinergics and oral corticosteroids.
- Use your quick-relief (rescue) medicine during a flare-up or before you exercise.
- Talk to your doctor if you use your quick-relief medicine more than two times a week.



Normal airway



Airway during an asthma flare-up

Take your medicines as directed by your doctor. If you do, you

- ✓ may have more days without asthma symptoms
- ✓ won't have to use the quick-relief medicine as often
- ✓ may have fewer asthma symptoms at night
- ✓ may breathe better