

# Achieve

A Newsletter  
for AvMed  
Members

## ▶ YOUR HEALTHIEST LIFE WITH ASTHMA

# Take Charge With Your Asthma Action Plan

Everybody with asthma needs an action plan. That's because an asthma attack can quickly turn into an emergency. "An action plan puts you in control," says Vanessa Cavero-Chavez, M.D., an allergist at University of Florida Health. "If a flare-up happens, you'll know exactly what to do." Try these 4 simple steps:

### 1 Partner With Your Doctor

"Discuss your triggers and symptoms, then come up with a plan together," says Dr. Cavero-Chavez. This is a team exercise.

### 2 Write It Down

Include your name, emergency contacts, your doctor's info, and triggers. Then share it with family, friends, and coworkers.

### 3 Know Your Zones

**Green zone.** Your breathing is good, and your peak flow is 80% or more.

**Yellow zone.** You have mild breathing trouble. Your peak flow is 50%-79%.

Step up your quick-relief medicines (and others as directed by your doctor).

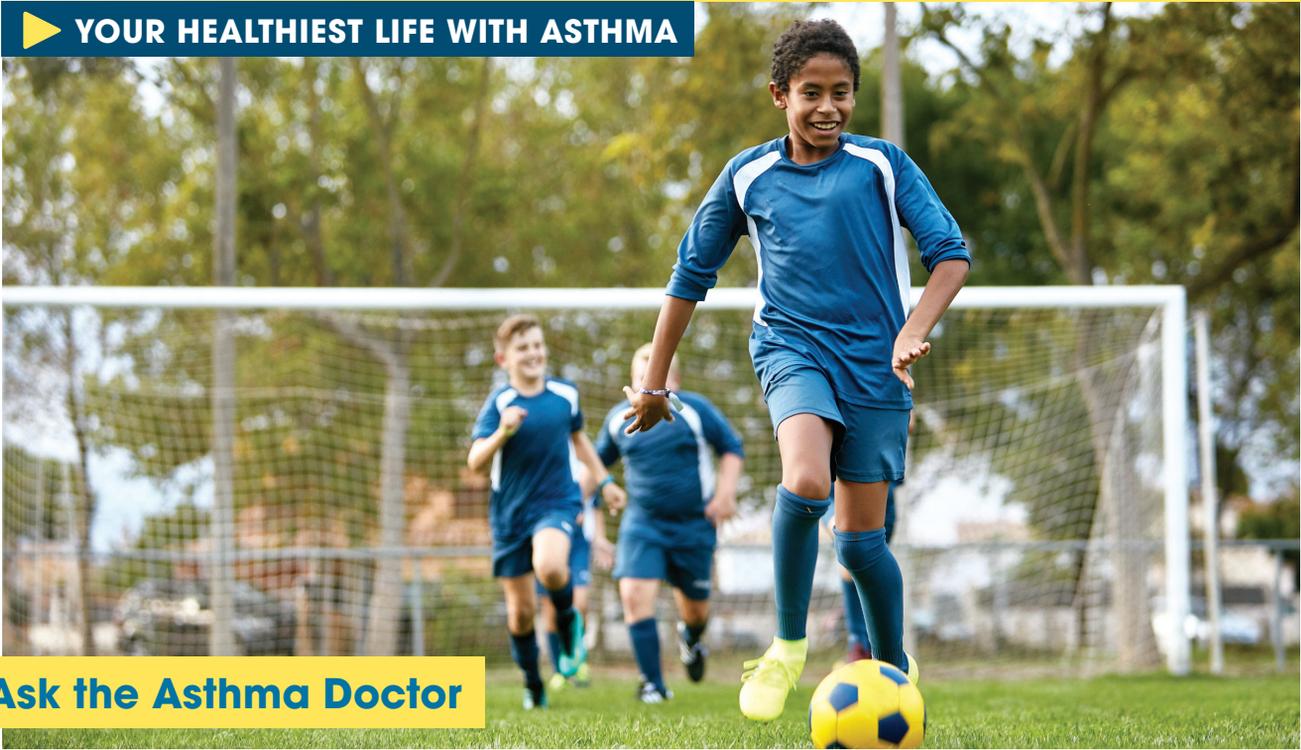
**Red zone.** You're having trouble breathing. Your medications aren't helping, and your peak flow is under 50%. Call your doctor or 911.

### 4 Be Prepared

Always carry your fast-acting rescue inhaler, and replace any expired medications.



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### Ask the Asthma Doctor

## Q Is it safe for kids with asthma to keep playing sports?

**A** Yes! "I definitely encourage kids with asthma to keep playing sports," says Theresa Guilbert, M.D., a spokesperson for the American Academy of Pediatrics. "It's an important way to keep kids healthy. If a child has asthma symptoms while playing, taking a short-acting rescue inhaler

before the game can help." (Ask your doctor if it's right for your child.)

A research review in the *Journal of Clinical Medicine* found that higher levels of physical activity reduce the risk of asthma attacks, leading to better lung function and fewer doctor visits. In one study, people with asthma who had at least 30 minutes of aerobic exercise three times a week improved asthma

control and reduced shortness of breath.

Which sports are best? "Any sport your child enjoys is fine," says Dr. Guilbert. "Some kids do well with swimming, while others find that the pool chemicals trigger an attack. Some kids are bothered by outdoor allergies, but others love being outside." The goal? Help your child find an activity they like and stick with it.

### We're Here for You

Your Case Manager can connect you to the resources you need. Just call **1-833-609-0735**.



## Healthy Eating Made Simple

Elizabeth Ferrer, R.D., AvMed's registered dietitian, shares her favorite tips for happier, healthier meals — without feeling deprived.

### 7 Ways to Break a Salt Habit

**H**ealthy eating is all about balance, especially when it comes to sodium (aka salt). It keeps your fluid levels just right and helps transmit electrical signals throughout your nervous system. But too much can make you retain water, raise blood pressure, contribute to heart disease and stroke, and damage your kidneys or liver.

Here are my seven favorite strategies for eating less salt. Try a couple of them each week. Done consistently, they can have a big impact. After a few weeks, you won't miss the shaker!

**1** Eat more fresh fruits and veggies. They're naturally low in sodium

and loaded with nutrients. Choose frozen veggies with no added sauce.

**2** Say no to processed foods like ramen noodles, macaroni-and-cheese kits, and packaged frozen dinners.

**3** Buy fresh meats and avoid processed ones like bacon, lunch meats, and hot dogs — they're super high in sodium.

**4** Cook creatively. Instead of using salt, try a squeeze of lemon or lime juice or a splash of vinegar. Experiment with new spices and herbs.

**5** Choose lower-sodium condiments. They may have up to 96% less sodium than regular varieties. Read food labels to find low-sodium options.

**6** Be smart when you eat out. Restaurant portions can be huge — and high in sodium. So cut your salt and calories in half by sharing a plate with a friend or taking half your dinner home. Ask your server how dishes have been prepared and see if the chef can cook your meal with less salt. If your entrée comes with sauce, request it on the side, then use it sparingly.

**7** Snack wisely. Try to just say no to chips and pretzels. Instead, reach



for dried fruit or lower-sodium cheeses. Longing for something crunchy? Try fresh fruit or veggies, like a carrot or an apple. You'll be glad you did.

## When Times Are Tough, We're Here to Help

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**Through our partnership with Optum Behavioral Health**, we can lead Members to the right resources for mental

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Members can even download **Sanvello**, an

app that can share strategies for dialing down symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression — anytime. These powerful tools are there for Members whenever symptoms come up.

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Health and wellness or prevention information.