

Key Messages

- An asthma action plan is a tool to help you manage asthma with confidence.
- It is important to know how to use it and to always refer to it when your child has asthma symptoms.
- It should be reviewed and updated at least once a year with the health care provider.
- Give a copy to anyone who cares for your child and teach them how and when to use it.
- Always take it and your medicines with you when you go to the clinic or the emergency room so the provider will know what your primary care provider has recommended.

Assessment

- Does the client have an Asthma Action Plan?
 - If YES, then continue with this protocol.
 - If NO, then inform project nurse and go over the benefits of the asthma action plan with the caregiver. Once plan is available, proceed with this protocol at next visit.
- Is the plan up-to-date (reviewed with the medical provider less than a year ago)?
- Where is it kept? Is it easily viewed and accessed?
- Review client's use of current Asthma Action Plan.
 - Is the plan understood by the client? Review scenarios (see appendix) and see if client knows what to do based on plan.
 - How often does the client consult the plan?
 - Are there any problems following the action plan?
 - When you used the plan was it helpful? Did you have problems following the action plan?

CAS/CHW Actions

- Use the action plan as a teaching tool. Involve both the child and parent when discussing the action plan if the child is 8 years or older. Ask the child to be responsible for making the initial assessment of zone and figuring out the appropriate action. Younger children (8-10) should

consult with an adult every time, but older children (11 and older) may be able to act on their own. These are approximate age ranges and depend on the capabilities of the child.

- Check to see if client has an Action Plan. If not, contact the project nurse and encourage client to ask provider for plan.
- Check to see where the client keeps the plan and make sure it is easy to find and consult.
- Review Action Plan with client and make sure it is understood.
 - Discuss using both symptoms and peak flow (if appropriate) to monitor asthma.
 - How to know when in yellow zone/red zone.
 - Make sure child's OWN early warning signs are included. Ask: "Is there anything you notice before your child gets asthma symptoms?"
 - Using the child's action plan, have the caregiver practice recognizing what zone her child is in and what she should do (see action plan scenarios in the appendix). If you don't know her peak flow measures, use symptoms. If she doesn't have an action plan yet, use a blank one for practice using symptoms to identify what zone she is in.
- Encourage the client to consult the plan regularly and whenever symptoms or peak flow worsen. Help client address barriers to use of plan.
- Make sure the child's other caretakers (child care, school, relatives, coaches, etc.) have a copy.
- Encourage the client to review the plan with the primary medical provider.

Client Actions

- Have an up-to-date Action Plan.
- Review Action Plan with your main health care provider and asthma nurse
- Keep the Action Plan where it is easy to see.
- Refer to Action Plan for what medicines to use everyday and what actions to take when asthma symptoms worsen.
- Provide copies of Action Plan to others caring for your child.
- Keep peak flow/symptom diary if you find this useful and share it with your medical provider.

Supplies

- Action Plan scenarios (see appendix).
- Sample action plan (for use with scenarios: see appendix).

Education Handouts

- none

Background

- The Asthma Action Plan is a tool to help you manage asthma with greater confidence.
 - Once you are ver familiar with it, you won't need to refer to it every time. But it still should be reviewed at least once a year with your provider.
 - Helps you work with your health care provider in planning care for your child.
 - Gives you a written document to use with teachers, childcare workers/babysitters and others who care for your child. Use it to teach them how to recognize asthma symptoms and know what to do when your child has symptoms.
 - Provides a step-by-step plan of action that will help you remain calm and give you direction when your child's asthma worsens.
- The Asthma Action Plan can help to keep your child's asthma in good control.
- The Asthma Action Plan describes what regular medicines to use every day.
- The Asthma Action Plan includes actions to take when asthma symptoms or peak flows worsen, including what medicines to take and when to contact the health care provider or seek emergency care.
- All caregivers of the child should understand the Asthma Action Plan and have a copy.
- The Asthma Action Plan can be used when seeking emergency care from a health care provider to let the provider know how your child's asthma is usually treated.
- Your health care provider should give you an Action Plan, and review it with you at least once a year to make sure it's up-to-date.

Appendix: Action Plan Scenarios

Using the child's action plan, have the caregiver practice recognizing what zone her child is in and what she should do. If you don't know her peak flow measures, use symptoms. Examples:

- 1) Cindy has started coughing more often and her chest feels scratchy. Her peak flow is 260.
 - What zone is she in? (yellow)
 - What should she do? (take two puffs of her rescue medicine)

She begins to feel better and her peak flow rises to 340. But then in a four hours, her cough returns and her peak flow is back to 240.

- What should she do now? (take two more puffs of her rescue medicine now and repeat every 4-6 hours, double her dose of controller medicine [take twice as many puffs each scheduled time], and call her medical provider).
- 2) Jose has been having more and more asthma symptoms over the past several days. He is now short of breath when he runs a little bit to catch the bus and is not sleeping well because of a cough. His peak flow is 160.
 - What zone is he in? (red)
 - What should he do? (take two puffs of his rescue medicine now, repeat again in 20 minutes and again in another 20, call his medical provider right away, and call the Children's Consultation nurse if he can't reach his provider; if he starts feeling worse and hasn't gotten help over the phone, he should go to the emergency department or call 911).
 - 3) Darrick, whose asthma is usually well controlled, has been coughing last night. He checked his peak flow in the morning and it is 280.
 - What zone is he in? (Yellow)
 - What should he do? (Take 2 puffs of rescue medicine.)

He feels better and his cough goes away. He checks his peak flow later in the day and it is 350. His cough hasn't come back.

- Now what should he do? (Take 2 puffs of his rescue medicine every 4-6 hours for the 1-2 days, take double the number of puffs in the morning and evening of his inhaled steroid preventive medicine for the next week, and call his medical provider.

Using an Asthma Action Plan Checklist

Key Messages

- AAP is a tool to manage asthma with confidence.
- Know how to use it. Always look at it when symptoms occur.
- Review once/year with provider.
- Copies to all caregivers. Teach them how to use it.
- Take to ER with medicines.

Assessment

- Does child have AAP?
- Is it up to date?
- Where is it kept?
- Review use:
- Is it understood?
- How often do you refer to it?
- Any problem following it?

CHW/CAS Actions

- Involve parent and child in discussion if child ≥ 8 years old.
- If no AAP, contact project nurse. Encourage client to ask provider for one.
- Make sure it's easy to find.
- Review AAP use:
- use both symptoms and peak flow to monitor
- how to know yellow and red zone
- child's own warning signs
- Encourage regular use. Address barriers to use.
- Copies to other caregivers needed?
- Remind client to review AAP with provider regularly

