

Questions you may have for your pharmacist

- What does this medicine do?
- How will this medicine help me?
- How long will it take for the medicine to work?
- How long will I need to use this medicine for?
- How and when should I take this medicine?
- Can you check my inhaler technique?
- What should I do if the medicine doesn't agree with me?
- Should I avoid any other medicines, drinks, foods or activities when I'm taking this medicine?
- How can I give up smoking?
- What's the best way to lose weight?

Be prepared

Your pharmacist may ask questions about your asthma to work out whether it's well managed. They may be able to help you themselves – for example, by checking you're taking your medicine as prescribed – or advise you to see your GP. You could take along your written asthma action plan to give them more information. And have a think about these questions before you go:

IN THE PAST MONTH:

- Have you had trouble sleeping because of asthma symptoms (including cough)?
- Have you had any symptoms during the day (cough, wheeze, chest tightness or breathlessness)?
- Has your asthma interfered with your usual activities (eg housework, work, school etc)?

YOUR PHARMACIST MAY ALSO ASK:

- How many times did you use your reliever inhaler (usually blue) in the last week?
- Do you have a written asthma action plan?
- Do you use a peak flow meter and diary?
- Do you keep a symptom diary?

Use your support network

Having asthma can be challenging at times. But there are various people who can help ease your concerns and take the pressure off in different ways. Take five minutes to write down a list of who you can call...

- **Friends, family and colleagues** can help with practical chores, or sometimes just by listening. Don't be afraid to share your feelings with them.
- **Your healthcare team** – your GP, asthma nurse, specialist consultant and pharmacist – are all on hand to provide the care and support you need.
- **Asthma UK's friendly expert nurses** can support and reassure you and your family by answering any concerns you have about your asthma. Just call 0300 222 5800 (9am – 5pm; Mon – Fri).

Your online asthma community will be there whatever time of day:

- Swap ideas with others: www.facebook.com/AsthmaUK
- Get information, tips and ideas on everything from inhalers to triggers: www.asthma.org.uk
- Get the latest asthma news and weather alerts by following us on Twitter: [@AsthmaUK](https://twitter.com/AsthmaUK)

Make the most of your pharmacist

How they can help you manage your asthma



Our Facebook followers tell us how their pharmacist has helped them:

“ Mine double checked my new inhaler and nighttime asthma tablets didn't interfere with my other medicines. And he primed my new Symbicort SMART for me so it was ready to use. ”

Fiona Cameron

“ When I had hay fever symptoms for the first time a few years ago, my pharmacist explained why it was so important to manage them and suggested some medicine to help. ”

Kevin MacNeil

Any asthma questions?

Call our friendly expert nurses

0300 222 5800

(9am – 5pm; Mon – Fri)

www.asthma.org.uk



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Your pharmacist is here to help

As well as your GP or asthma nurse, and your consultant/specialist if you have one, a pharmacist is a health expert you can turn to for advice and support – and you don't need an appointment.

Pharmacists are highly trained healthcare professionals who can answer questions about lots of conditions, including asthma. They can often help directly – for example, if you have concerns about your medicines or how to take them. Otherwise, they will let you know when it's important you see your GP or asthma nurse – for example, if symptoms are getting worse, or there are questions about whether your medicines need changing.

Pharmacists are based in independent chemists, supermarket pharmacies, high-street pharmacy chains (such as Boots and Lloyds), GP surgeries and hospital pharmacies.

If you have any questions about your asthma or if your asthma is stopping you from leading the life you'd like, you can walk into any community pharmacy and ask to see the pharmacist. This is useful because:

- You don't need an appointment
- Some are open outside of GP surgery hours
- Many pharmacies have private consultation rooms.

TOP TIP

As well as getting information and reassurance from your pharmacist, some also offer free repeat prescription collection services.

Here are our top tips on how to get support and advice from your local pharmacist:

! Get the best from your medicines

You can ask your pharmacist about any prescription or over-the-counter medicines you're taking. This is especially useful if you have concerns – about side effects, for example, or if you think your inhaler's not working properly.

You can ask your pharmacist if they offer a free 10 to 20-minute private consultation called a 'Medicines Use Review'. This is available from accredited pharmacists in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and a similar service is available in Scotland. At the end of the review, your pharmacist will give you a copy of their recommendations, so you have a record of what was agreed, and a copy will be sent to your GP.

It is a great opportunity for you to:

- ask questions about your medicines
- learn more about the medicines you take and how they work
- discuss any worries you might have
- ask for help to overcome any problems you may be experiencing, such as difficulties taking your medicines or side effects.

TOP TIP

If you live in England and you've been diagnosed with asthma recently or if you've been prescribed a new asthma medicine for the first time, you can also ask your pharmacist about the 'New Medicine Service'. This free private service is a chance to work with your pharmacist during the first few weeks of taking your new medicine to have any questions answered and to iron out any problems you're experiencing.

! Make your inhaler work for you

Using your inhaler(s) properly ensures as much medicine as possible gets down into your lungs, where it's needed. So ask your pharmacist if they can check your inhaler technique. Even if you've been using the same asthma medicine for years, you might have developed some bad habits, and a few tweaks to how you're using your inhaler may make all the difference. Your pharmacist may also be able to help with other concerns you have about your inhaler(s).

! Worried about side effects?

If you're worried about side effects and it's putting you off using your asthma medicines exactly as your GP prescribed, you could be putting your health at risk. Why not chat to your pharmacist about any side effects you're worrying about or experiencing, and get advice on how to reduce or manage them?



! Get help to stop smoking

Have you decided to – or are you struggling to – give up smoking? Chat with your pharmacist to help work out a plan to make it easier. They may be able to advise you on the right products to try, as well as give you information on local quit-smoking courses and services.

! Ask for help with hay fever

Around 80 per cent of people with asthma tell us they also have hay fever. And if your hay fever is poorly managed, it may trigger asthma symptoms. Your pharmacist can help by advising on medicines to get hay fever symptoms under control.

! Need to manage your weight?

If you're carrying extra weight, it could be making your asthma symptoms worse. Ask your pharmacist whether they can suggest local courses, products and tips to get back on track.