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Management of Asthma in Adults – Questionnaire and Information

Many patients with asthma have symptoms that are well controlled and managed with inhalers. In order to avoid unnecessary appointments for those patients with stable asthma we would be grateful if you would answer the questions below and return this sheet to the surgery:

Have you had difficulty sleeping because of your asthma symptoms (including cough)?	YES/NO
Have you had your usual asthma symptoms during the day (cough, wheeze, chest tightness or breathlessness)?	YES/NO
Has your asthma interfered with your usual activities (for example, housework, work/school, etc.)?	YES/NO
Peak flow rate (if available)L/m

If you have answered “**YES**” to any of the questions above then we would ask you to make an appointment for an asthma check with our practice nurse.

If you have answered “**NO**” to these questions it is likely that your asthma is well controlled, you do not need to have a face to face appointment and we will update your records accordingly to indicate this.

In order to further update your medical record to ensure accuracy, we wondered if you could update the following health information.

Are you a smoker? YES/NO

If Yes, then how many do you smoke?

Are you an ex-smoker? YES/NO

If yes, how many did you smoke?

Thank you for your help in keeping your records up to date.
Westbury on Trym Primary Care Centre

Information leaflet on managing asthma

What are the symptoms of untreated asthma?

The common symptoms are cough and wheeze. You may also become breathless, and develop a feeling of chest tightness. Symptoms can range from mild to severe between different people, and at different times in the same person. Each episode of symptoms may last just an hour or so, or persist for days or weeks unless treated.

What are the typical symptoms if you have mild untreated asthma?

You tend to develop mild symptoms from time to time. For example, you may develop a mild wheeze and a cough if you have a cold or a chest infection, or during the hay fever season, or when you exercise. For most of the time you have no symptoms. A child with mild asthma may have an irritating cough each night, but is often fine during the day.

What are the typical symptoms if you have moderate untreated asthma?

You typically have episodes of wheezing and coughing from time to time. Sometimes you become breathless. You may have spells, sometimes long spells, without symptoms. However, you tend to be wheezy for some of the time on most days. Symptoms are often worse at night, or first thing in the morning. You may wake some nights coughing or with a tight chest. Young children may not have typical symptoms. It may be difficult to tell the difference between asthma and recurring chest infections in young children.

What are the typical symptoms of a severe attack of asthma?

You become very wheezy, have a tight chest, and have difficulty in breathing. You may find it difficult to talk because you are so breathless. Severe symptoms may develop from time to time if you normally have moderate symptoms. Occasionally, severe symptoms develop suddenly in some people who usually just have mild symptoms.

A typical treatment plan

A common treatment plan for a typical person with moderate asthma is:

- A preventer inhaler (usually a steroid inhaler), taken each morning and at bedtime. This usually prevents symptoms throughout the day and night. The dose of your steroid inhaler may need to be increased if you feel yourself getting wheezy.
- A reliever inhaler may be needed now and then if breakthrough symptoms occur. For example, if symptoms flare up when you have a cough or cold.
- If exercise or sport causes symptoms, then a dose of a reliever inhaler just before the exercise usually prevents symptoms.
- The dose of the preventer inhaler may need to be increased for a while if you have a cough or cold, or during the hay fever season.
- Some people may need to add in a long-acting bronchodilator, or tablets, if symptoms are not controlled with the above.

At first, adjusting doses of inhalers is usually done on the advice of a doctor or nurse. In time, you may agree an asthma action plan with your doctor or nurse.

It is vital that you learn how to use your inhalers correctly. In some people, symptoms persist simply because they do not use their inhaler properly, and the drug from the inhaler does not get into the airways properly. See your practice nurse or pharmacist if you are not sure if you are using your inhaler properly.

For further help and advice leaflets visit AsthmaUK at <http://www.asthma.org.uk/>