

adults and children with
asthma



KNOWLEDGE IS POWER – TAKE CONTROL

asthma seek and find

A C T I O N P L A N M C
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G O H E A L T H P L A N

ACTION PLAN

BE ACTIVE

TRIGGERS

INHALER

SYMPTOMS

YOU CAN DO IT

AIRWAYS

HEALTH PLAN

DOCTOR

PEAK FLOW

COUGH

RESCUE MEDICATION

ASTHMA

BREATHE

IN CONTROL

SPACER

WHEEZING

How much do you **know** **about asthma?**

Air goes in and out of your lungs through tubes called airways when you breathe. Asthma causes changes in your airways that can make it hard to breathe.

What does asthma feel like?

The main symptoms of asthma include:

- **Coughing**
- **Wheezing (whistling)**
- **A feeling like someone is sitting on your chest**
- **Not being able to catch your breath**

What happens when you have asthma symptoms?

Two main things happen when you have symptoms:

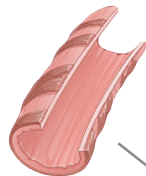
- 1. The airways swell and fill with mucus**
- 2. The muscles around the airways tighten, making the airway smaller**

Will my asthma go away?

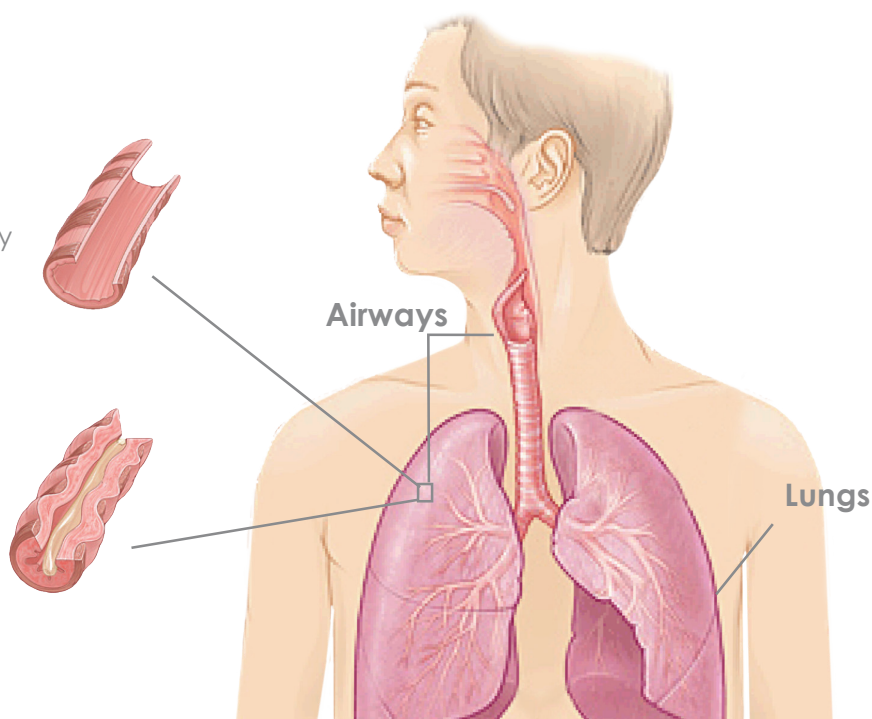
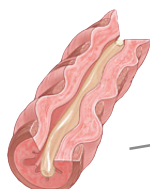
- There is no cure for asthma but it can be treated.
- With the right treatment, you can still do things you like.
- Asthma is always with you. It is important to stop symptoms before they appear.

Remember: you can make a difference in your asthma care. Talk with your doctor to make sure you are doing all you can to prevent your asthma symptoms.

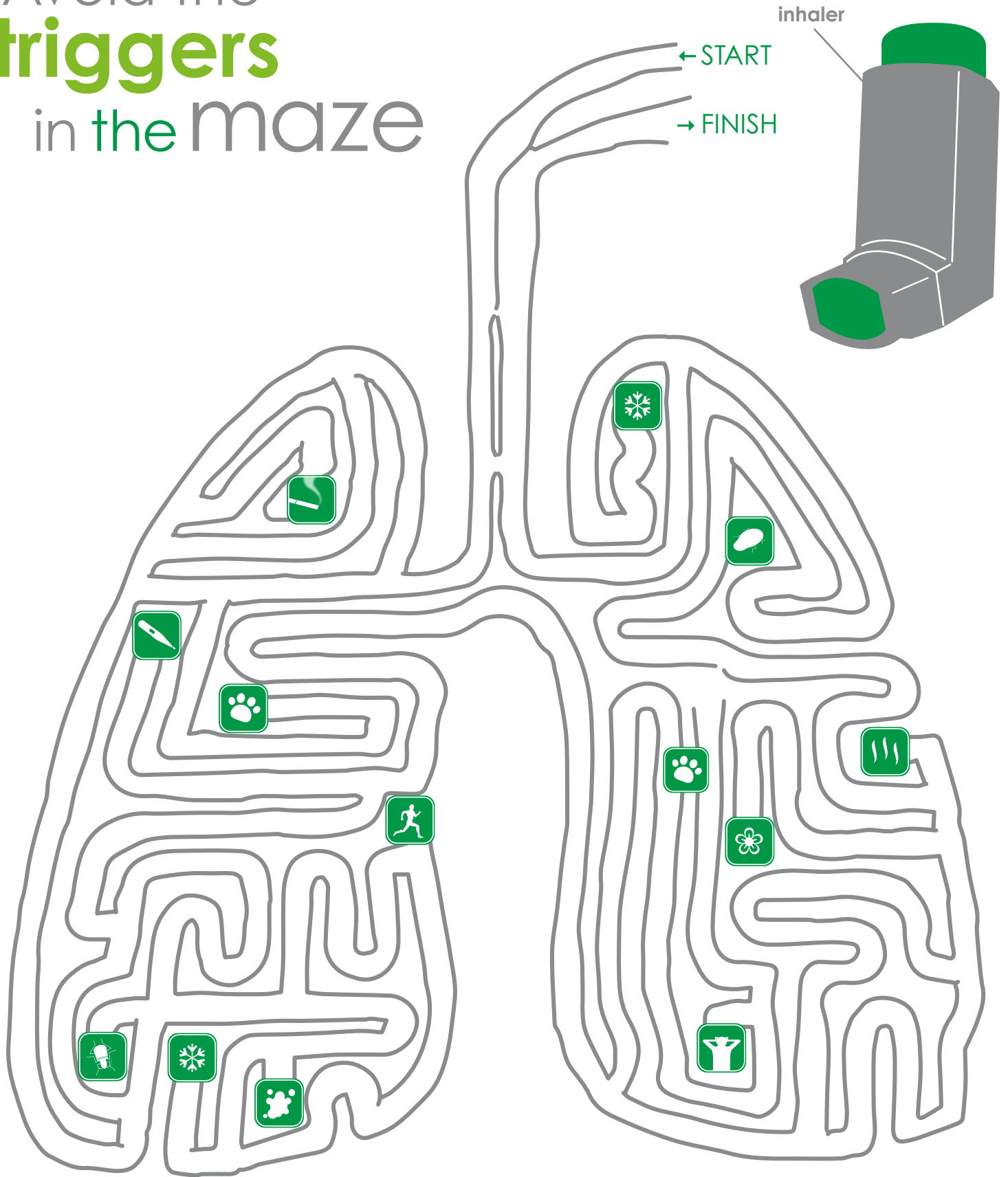
Normal Airway is wide open—breathing is easy



Airway with asthma is swollen, narrow, and filled with mucus—breathing is hard



Avoid the
triggers
in the maze



asthma triggers

Many things may bring on your asthma symptoms or make them worse. They are called triggers.

Pay attention to things that make your asthma worse. Avoid these triggers if you can. For triggers you cannot avoid, learn how to stop asthma symptoms from getting worse. Talk with your doctor if you have any questions about your asthma or your triggers.

Smoke



- If you smoke, get help to quit.
- Do not allow smoking in the house or car.
- Make sure wood-burning stoves and fireplaces are well ventilated, or avoid use, if possible.

Dust Mites



- Keep mattresses and pillows in dust mite proof covers.
- Wash your sheets and blankets each week. Use very hot water.
- Remove stuffed toys from the bedroom, or wash them weekly in hot water.
- Stay out of rooms that are being vacuumed. Vacuuming may stir up dust.
- Take rugs and carpets out of the bedroom.

Cockroaches



- Do not keep food in your bedroom.
- Keep food and trash sealed.

Pollen



- Stay inside and keep windows closed when pollen levels are high.

Exercise



- Ask your doctor if you should take asthma medicine before you exercise.
- Warm up before you exercise.

Strong Odors



- Avoid perfume, powder, aerosol sprays like hairspray or insect spray, and strong smelling cleaning products.

Weather



- On cold days, cover your nose and mouth with a scarf to avoid breathing in cold air.

Pets



- Keep pets with fur or feathers out of your bedroom, or home, if possible.
- Give pets a bath to reduce dander.

Mold



- Fix leaky faucets and pipes.
- Clean moldy areas, including shower curtains.
- Keep basement areas dry.

Colds



- Avoid people with colds.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.

Stress



- Try to stay calm and breathe slowly.
- Focus on things that keep you calm or happy.

If you cannot stay away from your triggers, talk with your doctor to find ways to manage them.

preventing asthma symptoms

It is important to know how to prevent your asthma symptoms.

Help prevent your asthma symptoms by following these steps every day:

- **Take your daily preventive asthma medicine, even if you feel OK, as directed by your doctor.**
- **Always keep your rescue inhaler with you.**
- **Make an asthma action plan with your doctor.**
- **Know your asthma triggers and how to avoid them.**

If your asthma symptoms get severe:

Sometimes your asthma symptoms can become very severe and lead to a severe asthma episode or an attack. During a severe attack, your airways tighten more than usual. This makes it harder to breathe. You may see warning signs before you have a severe asthma episode. Knowing what your symptoms are can help you take action to prevent a severe episode.

Things to think about:

- **What do you want to do that you cannot do now because of asthma symptoms?**
- **What makes it hard for you to follow your asthma action plan daily?**
- **What do you want to talk about at your next asthma visit?**



symptoms and warning signs to watch out for:

- Wheezing
- Getting out of breath easily
- Tightness in chest
- Increased coughing
- Drop in peak flow meter reading
- Breathing faster than normal
- Using your rescue inhaler more often than usual
- Waking up at night with asthma symptoms
- Not being able to do some or all of your usual activities

What to do if you have severe asthma symptoms:

- Follow your asthma action plan and directions from your doctor
- Use your rescue inhaler as directed by your provider
- Relax, stay calm, and try to breathe slowly and deeply
- Get help when you need it

Call 911 or go to the hospital if...

- you are having trouble walking or talking, or
- if your lips or fingernails are turning blue

Talk with your doctor today about what you can do to prevent asthma symptoms.

is your **asthma** under control?



When your asthma is under control:

- You have asthma symptoms two days a week or less.
- Your asthma symptoms wake you up at night one to two times a month or less.
- You can do all your normal activities.
- You use your rescue inhaler two days a week or less.
- Your peak flow meter is more than 80% of your personal best number.
- You do not have to take corticosteroids by mouth more than once a year for your asthma.

Learn what asthma control looks like. Talk with your doctor today to help you understand more about it.

medicines for asthma

There are two main types of medicine for asthma:

Daily preventive asthma medicine

- Take it every day, even if you feel OK, as directed by your doctor
- Helps prevent asthma symptoms
- Usually an inhaler or pills
- Not to be used for sudden symptoms

* TIP: Try to take it at the same time every day.

Rescue medicine

- Everyone with asthma needs a rescue inhaler
- Take your rescue inhaler when you have sudden asthma symptoms
- Helps open airways when you have symptoms

- Talk with your doctor if you use a rescue inhaler more than two days a week

* TIP: Keep your rescue inhaler with you at all times.

Steroids for asthma

- Steroids for asthma are NOT the same as steroids used to build muscle. Steroids for asthma are called corticosteroids
- Steroids for asthma are often taken as an inhaler
- If asthma is severe, steroid pills or liquids may be taken for a short time



Talk with your doctor about your asthma and medicines at each visit.

using an **inhaler** for **asthma**

An inhaler delivers medicine directly to your lungs. There are many different kinds of inhalers. One kind of inhaler is a metered-dose inhaler. Your doctor will choose the kind that works best for you.

How to Use a Metered-Dose Inhaler*

1. Open the inhaler.
2. Hold the inhaler with the mouthpiece towards you.
3. Check for and remove any loose objects in the inhaler.
4. Shake the inhaler (if recommended by inhaler instructions).
5. Breathe out all the way through your mouth.
6. Put the mouthpiece in your mouth and close your lips around it.
7. Use one dose of inhaler while you breathe deeply and slowly in through your mouth.
8. Remove the inhaler from your mouth.
9. Hold your breath for 10 seconds or for as long you are comfortable. This allows the medicine time to get into your airways.
10. Breathe out normally.
11. Wait about one minute, prepare inhaler for next dose, and repeat these steps – as instructed by your doctor.
12. If your inhaler is a corticosteroid medicine, rinse out your mouth with water and spit out the rinse. Do not swallow it.



***You may need to prime your inhaler before using. Always follow the instructions that come with your inhaler. Show your doctor how to use your inhaler to make sure you are using it correctly.**

using a spacer with your inhaler



A spacer is a hollow tube that attaches to your metered-dose inhaler. It slows down the delivery of your inhaled asthma medicine by “holding” it in the tube until you are able to breathe it in. A spacer can make it easier for some people to take their inhaler medicine correctly. Spacers can help children and adults get the most from their inhaled asthma medicine. Your doctor will tell you if you should use a spacer. Spacers should not be used with dry-powder inhalers.

- You need a prescription from your doctor to get a spacer from your pharmacy.
- Spacers come in different sizes and shapes. Ask your doctor which is the best spacer for you and exactly how to use your spacer.

If you use a spacer, show your doctor how to use it with your inhaler. This will help to know if you are using it correctly.

Keep your spacer clean

Medicine can build up inside your spacer. Cleaning your spacer often will help to make sure it works correctly. To clean your spacer, follow the instructions that come with it. Talk with your doctor or ask at your pharmacy if you have questions. Ask them when to clean your spacer and how to clean your spacer.



using a peak flow meter

A peak flow meter measures how well you are able to push air out of your lungs. You can use it to find out if your airways are getting tighter.

When your airways get tighter, your peak flow numbers are lower. Your peak flow reading helps tell if your asthma is under control, if it is getting worse, or if you need emergency care. Keep a record of your peak flow numbers, and use your asthma action plan to help you and your doctor find the best way to control your asthma.



Follow these steps:

1. Stand or sit up straight.
Slide the marker to "0."
Do not cover the numbers on the meter with your fingers.
2. Take in a deep breath with your mouth open.
Quickly close your lips around the tube. Do not put your tongue in the hole.
Blow out once, as fast and as hard as you can.
3. Take the meter out of your mouth.
Find the number where the marker stopped.
Mark this number on your peak flow tracking sheet.
Slide the marker back to "0."
4. Take two more readings.
Mark each number on your tracking sheet.
Circle the highest number. This is your peak flow number.



Remember: Use your peak flow meter as directed by your doctor. Try to take the readings at the same time every day.

your **asthma** visit checklist

You and your doctor are a team working together to manage your asthma.

YES NO

Before Your Visit

Fill out this checklist before you go – check YES or NO.

Symptoms

- In the past few weeks, have you coughed, wheezed, felt short of breath, or had chest tightness: during the day, at night (causing you to wake up), or during or soon after exercise? YES NO

Medicines

- Do you take your rescue inhaler more than twice a week? YES NO
- What medicines are you taking for asthma, and how often do you take them? YES NO

Medicine	Dose	How Often
Daily preventive asthma medicine		
Rescue inhaler		
Other		

- Have your asthma medicines caused you any problems like shakiness, sore throat, or upset stomach? YES NO

Triggers

- Does anything at home, work, or school make your asthma worse? YES NO
If so, what is it? _____

Living with Asthma

- Have you missed work or school because of your asthma? YES NO
- Have you gone to the emergency room or been in the hospital because of your asthma since your last doctor's visit? YES NO
If yes, when and how often? _____
- Do you need a new or updated asthma action plan? YES NO
- What do you want to be able to do that you cannot do now because of your asthma?

- What other questions or concerns do you have?

during your visit

Talk with your doctor about any questions you answered yes. You may also want to ask your doctor about other asthma concerns. Here are some questions to think about. Write down notes during your visit.

Questions	Notes on What to Do
<input type="checkbox"/> Can you watch how I use my inhaler and tell me if I am using it correctly?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do I need any changes to my asthma medicines?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Daily preventive medicine or rescue inhaler medicine?	
<input type="checkbox"/> How can I better manage my asthma?	
<input type="checkbox"/> How can I avoid my asthma "triggers"? _____ (list triggers here)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Do we need to update or create an asthma action plan for me?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Should I get a lung function test?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Should I use a peak flow meter at home?	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____	

After Your Visit

- Make an appointment for your next asthma visit before you leave the office.

My next visit is on:

- Use your asthma action plan every day to help manage your asthma.
- Take your asthma medicine as directed by your doctor.
- Plan ahead and make the most of every visit with your doctor.

do not let asthma slow you down

Understanding more about your asthma symptoms can help you find ways to prevent them.

Think about your symptoms. Do you:

- Cough
- Wheeze
- Have chest tightness
- Have shortness of breath

If you have these symptoms, talk with your doctor about them. Include:

- Symptoms you have
- How often do symptoms occur
- When do symptoms occur
- What makes symptoms worse

Work with your doctor to find the best way to help prevent your asthma symptoms!

You may have these symptoms during the day, at night, or after exercise. You may also notice that asthma triggers like pet dander or smoke can make your symptoms worse.



asthma and **smoking**

Asthma causes changes in your airways that can make it hard to breathe. Asthma triggers can make it even harder for you to breathe. One common trigger is smoke.

Did you know that smoking could make your asthma worse?

Smoking is a trigger of asthma symptoms for many people. Smoke, and even the smell of smoke on clothes, can irritate your airways and cause the muscles around the airways to tighten. Because this trigger makes the airways smaller, asthma symptoms such as coughing and wheezing can occur. Smoking may also increase the risk for long-term lung damage.

Smoking affects you and others

If you are a smoker, find out more on how to stop smoking today. If you are not a smoker, find ways to avoid secondhand smoke. Inhaling other people's smoke can cause severe asthma symptoms. If you have a child with asthma, keep him or her away from secondhand smoke. Do not let anyone smoke around your child.

How to ask people not to smoke around you

Asking friends or family members not to smoke around you can be hard. If you have asthma, it is important to let people know how their smoke affects you.

- **Ask them not to smoke when they are with you.**
- **Tell them you have asthma attacks and that smoke makes it worse.**
- **Tell them your home is smoke-free.**

Did you know?

20 minutes after quitting, your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

quitting is hard

Here are some tips to help you stop smoking:

- Create a “quit plan.”
- Make a list of all the reasons why you want to quit smoking and carry it with you.
- Set a quit date and stick with it.
- Tell your doctor you want to stop. Your doctor can help you create a quit plan and suggest ways to stop.
- Ask for support from a friend or family member. Let the people who care about you help you stay on track.
- Find out what makes you want to smoke. Plan how you can avoid these things or deal with them without smoking.
- Make your entire home smoke-free. Not smoking in some rooms is not enough to reduce secondhand smoke.

When you are ready to stop smoking, ask for help. It is easier to quit if you have **SUPPORT from family, friends, and your doctor.**

asthma resource guide

Learn all you can about asthma. The following websites may help you find answers and support. You may also find some of these organizations on social media sites, such as Facebook.

Allergy & Asthma Network

8229 Boone Boulevard, Suite 260
Vienna, VA 22182
1-800-878-4403
www.allergyasthmanetwork.org

American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

555 East Wells St, Suite 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3823
414.272.6071
www.aaaai.org

American Lung Association National Office

55 W. Wacker Drive, Suite 1150
Chicago, IL 60601
1-800-LUNGUSA 1-800-586-4872
www.lungusa.org

Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America

8201 Corporate Dr, Suite 1000
Landover, MD 20785
1.800.727.8462
www.aafa.org

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, National Institutes of Health

Building 31
31 Center Drive
Bethesda, MD 20892
www.nhlbi.nih.gov

National Jewish Health

1400 Jackson St
Denver, CO 80206
1.877.225.5654
www.nationaljewish.org

US Environmental Protection Agency

US/EPA/Office of Radiation and Indoor
Air Indoor Environments Division
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20460
202.272.0167

asthma
seek and **find**
answers

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