

A Whole Person Approach to Asthma

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Asthma is a chronic inflammatory disease that affects the lungs, causing airways to narrow and swell, making breathing difficult. Individuals with asthma can react to various allergens and irritants, also known as asthma triggers. Asthma triggers can include things such as dust mites, pollen, pet dander, weather changes, exercise, air pollutants, smoke and strong emotions. Exposure to asthma triggers can lead to the presence of asthma symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest tightness.¹

While there is no cure, asthma can be effectively managed by understanding individual treatments, avoiding personal triggers, and creating a personalized asthma action plan with a healthcare provider.

Asthma Action Plans

People with asthma should work with a healthcare provider to develop a personalized asthma action plan to understand what to do for asthma symptoms and in the case of an emergency. These action plans are offered in multiple languages as well as literacy versions. **Click or scan the QR Code to access asthma action plan templates.**



Eight Dimensions of Wellness

Wellness is about more than just physical health. Wellness also includes the social, emotional, occupational, financial, intellectual, spiritual and environmental health of individuals. The eight dimensions of wellness can be used as a framework that reminds us that health comes from nurturing all parts of our life and allows us to live life fully. All eight dimensions of wellness are interconnected, so when one dimension is affected, the others can be impacted.²

This framework is great for setting goals and helping individuals manage certain health conditions, including asthma, because it is a multi-layered approach. This approach ties into asthma self-management as two of the key goals to self-management are to follow good health habits and make improved changes in life to prevent asthma problems.³ By using the framework of the eight dimensions of wellness, individuals are able to evaluate their personal health habits that could be affecting their asthma condition.

The figure at right shows the eight dimensions of wellness that support effective asthma self-management.



Emotional Wellness



Emotional wellness is the ability to understand, manage and express emotions in a healthy way. For individuals with asthma, it's especially important to manage strong emotions, as stress, anxiety, and other intense feelings can act as common asthma triggers. Practices like mindful breathing can help regulate emotional responses and support better asthma control.

Intellectual Wellness



Intellectual wellness involves engaging your mind through learning, creativity, and problem solving to expand knowledge and skills. For individuals with asthma this can mean actively learning about their condition, treatments, and personal triggers through a personalized asthma action plan. By staying curious and engaged, asthma can be managed confidently and effectively.

Financial Wellness



Financial wellness involves budgeting wisely, planning for the future, and feeling secure in your financial choices. For individuals with asthma, strong financial wellness and adequate health care coverage can ease the burden of managing healthcare costs and ensure consistent access to medication and care.

Physical Wellness



Physical wellness involves caring for your body through regular activity, nutritious eating, adequate sleep, and routine healthcare. For individuals with asthma, staying active can be challenging, but working with a health care provider to identify a plan for participating in low impact activities like walking, swimming, or yoga can offer great health benefits.

Occupational Wellness



Occupational wellness means being fulfilled and balanced in your work, especially when your workplace supports a healthy environment. A healthy workplace not only aligns with personal values and strengths, but also plays a vital role in overall well-being. For individuals with asthma a healthy workplace involves proper ventilation and ways to avoid exposure to irritants and other asthma triggers.

Environmental Wellness



Environmental wellness means living with your surroundings by creating a safe, clean, and healthy space to support personal well-being and the planet. The environment plays a big role in the management of asthma as poor air quality can trigger asthma symptoms and increase the risk of asthma attacks. It is important to stay informed on daily air quality levels in the local area.

Social Wellness



Social wellness involves fostering meaningful relationships, maintaining supportive connections, and engaging with your community. For individuals with asthma, being able to participate in regular activities in inclusive environments through sports, clubs, and other group activities can build a strong support system.

Spiritual Wellness



Spiritual wellness involves finding purpose, meaning, and inner peace through personal values and practices. For individuals with asthma, cultivating spiritual wellness through meditation, yoga, or mindfulness can help reduce stress and emotional triggers that often lead to asthma symptoms.

References

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3. Sturdivant, Jasmine. "Asthma Self-Management Skills | American Lung Association." *American Lung Association*, 20 May 2020, www.lung.org/blog/asthma-self-management-skills.

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For more information on asthma:

www.asthma.in.gov



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