Asthma is a long-term (chronic) disease of the airways.
Airways get swollen, narrow, and make mucus. Asthma can cause symptoms like coughing, wheezing, or feeling short of breath.

1. **Know your medicines and how to use them.**
   - **Controller**—used everyday to control airway swelling. You need a daily controller medicine if you have:
     - Day symptoms—more than 2 times a week
     - Night symptoms—more than 2 times a month
   - **Quick-Relief**—keep this medicine with you, but use only when you’re wheezy or short of breath.
   - **Devices**—know how to use your spacer or nebulizer.

2. **Learn what makes your asthma worse.**
   - Stay away from things that trigger your symptoms. This may be tobacco smoke, pets, dust, pollen, colds or other things at home or work.
   - If you have symptoms when exercising, use your quick relief medicine before you exercise.

3. **Keep track of your symptoms.**
   - Keep a diary of your symptoms.
   - A [peak flow meter](#) may be useful if you’re over 5 years old.

4. **Have an Asthma Action Plan.**
   Schedule a visit with your doctor or nurse to review and update your plan every year.

- See your doctor at least once a year.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about an annual flu shot.*

*National Institutes of Health www.nhlbi.nih.gov