

People with Moderate to Severe Asthma – CDC Guidance

Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19

People with moderate to severe asthma may be at higher risk of getting very sick from COVID-19. COVID-19 can affect your nose, throat, lungs (respiratory tract); cause an asthma attack; and possibly lead to pneumonia and acute respiratory disease.

Prepare for COVID-19

- Make sure that you have at least a 30-day supply of your medications
- Take everyday precautions like washing your hands, avoiding close contact, and staying at least 6 feet (about 2 arm lengths) from other people
- Wear masks in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household
- When out in public, keep away from others and avoid crowds
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid cruise travel and non-essential air travel
- During a COVID-19 spread (outbreak) in your community, stay home as much as possible to reduce your risk of being exposed
- If someone in your home is sick, have them stay away from the rest of the household to reduce the risk of spreading the virus in your home

Follow Your Asthma Action Plan

- Keep your asthma under control by following your asthma action plan
- Avoid your asthma triggers
- Continue current medications, including any inhalers with steroids in them
- Do not stop any medications or change your asthma treatment plan without talking to your healthcare provider
- Talk to your healthcare provider, insurer, and pharmacist about creating an emergency supply of prescription medications, such as asthma inhalers. Make sure that you have 30 days of non-prescription medications and supplies on hand in case you need to stay home for a long-time
- Take steps to help yourself cope with stress and anxiety
- As more cases of COVID-19 are discovered and our communities take action to combat the spread of disease, it is natural for some people to feel concerned or stressed. Strong emotions can trigger an asthma attack.

Any Disinfectant can Trigger an Asthma Attack

Follow the recommendations below to reduce your chance of an asthma attack while disinfecting to prevent COVID-19

If you have asthma

- Ask a co-worker without asthma to clean and disinfect surfaces and objects for you
- Stay in another room when cleaners or disinfectants are being used and right after their use

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- Use only cleaning products you must use. Some surfaces and objects that are seldom touched may need to be cleaned only with soap and water
- Make a list of the urgent care or health facilities near you that provide nebulizer/asthma treatments.
- If you have an asthma attack, move away from the trigger such as the disinfectant or the area that was disinfected. Follow your Asthma Action Plan. Call 911 for medical emergencies

The person cleaning and disinfecting should:

- Follow recommendations for cleaning and disinfecting to prevent COVID-19
- Choose disinfectants that are less likely to cause an asthma attack using EPA's list of approved products such as:
 - Products with hydrogen peroxide (no stronger than 3%) or ethanol (ethyl alcohol)
 - Products that do **NOT** contain peroxyacetic acid or peracetic acid
- Limit use of chemicals that can trigger asthma attacks, such as bleach (sodium hypochlorite) or quaternary ammonium compounds (i.e., benzalkonium chloride), and do not use them in enclosed spaces
- Follow additional precautions for cleaning and disinfecting places where people with asthma may be, to reduce exposure to asthma triggers.

Use products safely and correctly

- Always read and follow the directions on the product label to ensure you are using it safely and effectively
- Wear skin protection such as gloves and consider eye protection to protect yourself against splashes
- Make sure there is enough air flow (ventilation)
- Use only the amount recommended on the label
- Use water at room temperature for dilution (unless stated otherwise on the label)
- Do **NOT** mix chemical products. Label diluted cleaning solutions
- Follow EPA's 6 steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant Use

Store products safely and correctly:

- Store and use chemicals out of reach of children and pets
- Label diluted cleaning solutions
- Follow EPA's 6 steps for Safe and Effective Disinfectant use

If you feel ill

Contact your health care provider to ask about your symptoms. If you don't have a healthcare provider, contact your nearest community health center or health department. Remember to call 911 for medical emergencies.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/asthma.html>

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<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/six-steps-safe-effective-disinfectant-use>

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