

Health Awareness

A County Health Pool Publication



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Effectively Coping With Asthma



Spring is a time of year that many devote to promoting a particular health concern. One such concern is asthma awareness. For many, (20 million Americans), coping with this chronic condition that affects their ability to live a healthy and active life remains a challenge. However, to others it is still a mystery.

What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease in which the airways become blocked or narrowed. The effects are usually temporary, but they include; shortness of breath, breathing trouble, and other symptoms. If an asthma episode is severe, a person may need emergency treatment to restore normal breathing.

Much remains to be learned about what causes asthma and how to prevent it. However, what we do know is that for some it can be triggered by inhaling allergens such as dust mites, pet dander, pollens and mold. This reaction is called *allergic* (extrinsic) asthma.

Asthma may be caused by factors other than allergies. The symptoms will be the same: coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath or rapid

breathing, and chest tightness. *Non-allergic* asthma is triggered by other factors such as anxiety, stress, exercise, cold air, dry air, hyperventilation, smoke or other irritants.

What can you do?

There are many things that you can do to take control of your asthma and minimize its impact on your activities. Be proactive and do your research as each case of asthma is different, and treatment needs to be tailored for each person.

As a suggestion, removing the things in your environment that you know are contributing factors can help you take control of your asthma and minimize its impact on your activities.

When these measures are not enough, it may be time to try one of the many medications that are available to control symptoms.

Asthma medications are divided into two types—quick-relief and long-term control. They may be either inhaled or taken in pill form. Like all medications, asthma treatments often have side effects.



Be sure to ask your doctor about the side effects of the medications you are prescribed. For more information, please visit MyHealth@Anthem.com. It is a free resource to all CHP participants.

Your Health Fair Benefit

As spring nears, so do the various health fairs. Did you know you can get reimbursed up to \$40 for tests done at your local health fair (see your Plan Document for more information)? These tests usually cost far more if done at the clinic level. So take advantage of this unique benefit that CHP offers. **NOTE: You must have an official receipt to submit your claim.**

Prior Authorization and Step Therapy - I don't get it!

These issues can be confusing and alarming if we are not prepared. Please turn over for more information on your prescription program.

Understanding the Prescription Procedure

You left a moment ago from the doctor and now you are waiting in line at the pharmacy. Soon you will receive some distressing news, something no one wants to be told: you cannot have your prescription.



This experience has happened to some due to a common misunderstanding of how the prescription program works. The first question you should always ask is why the prescription has a problem. If it is an eligibility problem, call your benefits administrator and they should be able to help you while you are at the pharmacy. For prescription benefits, contact Anthem customer service at 1-866-698-0087.

In most cases the prescription has NOT been denied. It is simply being handled either as a **Prior Authorization** or **Step Therapy**.

Prior Authorization

If the matter involves Prior Authorization, that means the pharmacist needs to call Anthem before filling the prescription. Why? This is to insure you are receiving the correct dosage for your medication that will aide in safe utilization. Most plans have this feature, but require that the doctor call for prior authorization. At CHP, we allow the pharmacist

to call and this saves you valuable time.

Step Therapy

If the matter involves Step Therapy, that means that you may be able to use a less expensive alternative medication before benefits for the use of a higher priced medication can be authorized. The alternative medications are high quality medications that are proven safe and cost effective.

Prescription prices are the single most expensive factor in the medical industry today.

Working with these procedures will result in savings for both you and the plan. For a list of drugs that require prior authorization, quantity limits or step therapy, go to www.anthemprescription.com for more details.



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| ALLERGY | COUGH | SEVERE |
| ANTHEM | EXTRINSIC | SMOKE |
| ASTHMA | FACTOR | STEP |
| AUTHORIZATION | FAIR | SYMPTOM |
| AWARENESS | IMPACT | THERAPY |
| BREATHING | MYSTERY | TIGHTNESS |
| CONSTRUCT | NORMAL | WHEEZE |
| CONTROL | PROACTIVE | |