

help of a specialist, need to determine what went wrong. If you go to an ER because of your asthma, make a doctor's appointment as soon as you get home.

- 4 Follow a healthy lifestyle that includes adequate sleep, balanced nutrition and regular physical activity.



**ZERO**  
night-time awakenings

## Health Care Providers & Advisors

### Health Care Providers have the responsibility to:

- 1 Be familiar with the most current Canadian Adult and Pediatric Asthma Consensus Guidelines.
- 2 Update your knowledge about asthma, including its management on a regular basis through continuing medical education.
- 3 Consider all patients' personal circumstances of asthma management to help them achieve asthma-control goals.
- 4 Be "partners in care" with patients, providing them with appropriate and up-to-date information/advice about asthma and empowering them to make informed choices.
- 5 Build relationships with asthma patients based on mutual respect.

## Government

### Governments have the responsibility to:

- 1 Ensure timely access to proper care for all patients with asthma, including those in remote, isolated and First Nations communities.
- 2 Ensure access to regular asthma assessments and spirometry or lung-function testing in primary health care.
- 3 Ensure access to asthma education and self-management programs.
- 4 Ensure equality of asthma care. Recognize cultural, linguistic, and social barriers to proper care and strive to remove them.
- 5 Address outdoor and indoor environmental issues affecting the health of patients with asthma.

## National Asthma Patient Alliance – NAPA

The ASC developed the Asthma Patient Bill of Rights, with input from the NAPA executive and leading asthma experts from across Canada. The NAPA is a grassroots patient group with a mandate to lead advocacy efforts, organize advocacy/education initiatives and be recognized as a network of patient volunteers dedicated to improving asthma care and education and the quality of life of people living with asthma and associated allergies, and/or their caregivers, ensuring every Canadian with asthma achieves their highest level of asthma control.

[www.asthma.ca/napa](http://www.asthma.ca/napa)

For more information,  
please contact the Asthma Society of Canada  
toll free at **1 866 787 4050** or visit [www.asthma.ca](http://www.asthma.ca)



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Asthma Society of Canada

# Asthma Patient BILL OF RIGHTS

## Patients With Asthma



As a patient with asthma, you have the right to:

- 1 Strive for complete control of your asthma\*. Complete control of asthma means exactly what it sounds like: a life free of symptoms and limitations.

You should be aiming for:

- Zero symptoms
- Zero night-time awakenings
- Zero time lost from school, work and play
- Zero exercise limitations
- Zero emergency room visits
- Zero time spent in hospital because of asthma
- Zero side effects from asthma medications

AIM FOR ZERO

\*According to the guidelines of the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA): [www.ginasthma.org](http://www.ginasthma.org)

## Patient Responsibilities: Asthma Control is in Your Hands

### As a patient with asthma, you have the responsibility to:

- 1 Take an active role in managing your asthma** with the support of your health-care team. For the most part, control of your asthma rests with you. You are the one managing it on a day-to-day basis.
- 2 Stay informed about asthma and know your numbers**
  - *How is your lung function?* Peak flow measurements and spirometry are simple breathing or lung-function tests. Most children can do them by the age of six. Lung-function testing is a useful tool with which you and your health-care provider can assess the severity of your asthma. The results help determine the degree to which your asthma is controlled, and the type and amount of medication you need.
  - *How much rescue medication do you use?* Many people underestimate how often they have asthma symptoms. The amount of rescue medication you use is a good way to gauge your degree of asthma control. If you are using your reliever medication regularly, your asthma may not be controlled. You definitely should not need your reliever medication more than two times a week. If



**ZERO**  
emergency room visits

- 2 Discuss your personal targets in asthma management** with your doctor or health-care advisor. If your asthma is mild, asthma control goals are entirely within your reach with appropriate management, treatment and education. If you have more severe asthma, the targets are the same, but how close you come to achieving them depends on many factors. Some of these include the severity of your asthma, and the balance between potential side effects and the amount of medication you need for complete control.
- 3 Access accurate and up-to-date information/advice about asthma** and its management, and participate in decisions about your care. Ask your health-care advisors all you need to know about your asthma.
- 4 Access appropriate medications** as needed.
- 5 Access asthma and health-care services in a timely manner**, including physician appointments and treatment in hospitals anywhere in Canada.
- 6 Access regular asthma assessments** with follow-up visits scheduled without waiting for an emergency.
- 7 Access spirometry/lung function testing** in the primary health-care setting.
- 8 Access referral to an allergist** for assessment and testing when required.
- 9 Access asthma education programs** anywhere in Canada .
- 10 Know which asthma triggers are present** in the places you live, work and play, and be free from exposure to avoidable allergens such as second-hand smoke, scents, and animal dander.

you are using it more often, consult with your doctor.

- *How many triggers or allergies do you have?* Many people with asthma have allergic ‘triggers’ that make their asthma worse. Improve your asthma control by avoiding or reducing exposure to your allergens/triggers/irritants. Ask your doctor if you need to be tested for allergies and talk about medications that may help deal with your allergies.
- 3 Take control**
    - *Take your medication.* It sounds simple, but many people don’t take their medications properly. When used as prescribed, the asthma medications are safe and effective, so use them. If you’re not sure how, get help from your doctor, nurse, pharmacist or asthma educator.
    - *Make and keep regular asthma appointments.* Asthma is a chronic disease. One visit to a clinic or doctor’s office or emergency room is not going to ‘fix’ it. You need to see your doctor on a regular basis. How often you see your doctor depends on the severity of your asthma and level of asthma control. Make sure that each time you leave the office or clinic, your next appointment is booked.
    - *Make emergency room visits unnecessary.* With complete asthma control, no one with asthma should have to go to an emergency room (ER). That doesn’t mean you shouldn’t go to an ER if you feel you need to, but an ER visit is a sign of treatment failure. You and your primary-care doctor, perhaps with the