

# Breathe Easy

with Health Plan of Michigan



FALL 2006

**KEY POINTS**

**Be aware of your asthma triggers**

**Keep yourself healthy; see your doctor regularly**

**Follow your asthma action plan**

**Know when your asthma is getting out of control**

**Know what to do if your asthma is out of control**

**For more information on asthma call 1-888-437-0606 and ask for Disease Management or visit our website at [www.hpmich.com](http://www.hpmich.com)**

Any HPM member who has been diagnosed with Asthma is automatically enrolled in our Asthma Disease Management Program. If you do not wish to receive our newsletters and educational materials, please call 1-888-437-0606, ext. 1345.

## Know Your Asthma Medications

If you have asthma, your doctor has probably given you a daily plan of medication to control the number of asthma attacks and also to stop lung damage. Many people do not take their medications as they should. To keep your asthma under control, it's important that you know the medications you are on, what they do, and when to take them.

There are two key types of medications for asthma: **Controllers** and **Relievers**.

### Controllers

- Inflammation in the lungs is the main problem in asthma. Controller medications help with the inflammation.
- Most doctors agree that people with asthma should use controller medication to stop the inflammation in their airways.
- Controller medication is taken every day.
- Some examples of controller medicines are inhaled steroids like: Flovent, Pulmicort, Aerobid or Advair Diskus.
- Some controller medications in pill form include: Accolate, Singulair, Theophylline, and Theodur.

### Relievers (Rescue Medications)

- Relievers or Rescue medications are used to open the airways that close during an asthma attack.
- These medications are short-acting and don't do anything to help with the main problem of inflammation in asthma.
- Reliever medications should be taken only when needed.
- If you need to use your reliever medication more than twice a week during the day or twice a month at night, you should call your doctor.
- Your body will get used to your reliever medications, so their usefulness decreases over time.
- People who use their reliever medications often may not understand how bad their asthma can be.
- Some examples of reliever/rescue medications are: Proventil, Albuterol, Maxair, and Alupent.

**Please tear off and take to your next appointment**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My controller medication is: \_\_\_\_\_

My reliever medication is: \_\_\_\_\_

If I use my reliever more than \_\_\_\_ times/week, I will call my doctor.