

Identify and Treat Asthma in the Physician's Office

A simple and consistent process for identifying and treating patients with asthma offers many benefits. Use this tool as a process guide to managing patients in your office.

Benefits for Physicians and Staff

- Accomplish what needs to be done during visit
- Accomplish often neglected opportunities
 - Early diagnosis
 - Identification of noncompliance
 - Identification of patient education needs
- Utilize the time of physicians and office staff more efficiently
- Evaluate adherence to treatment guidelines

Tips for Setting up a Successful Office Approach to Asthma Management

- ✓ Start small.
- ✓ Make participation mandatory.
- ✓ Provide incentives to staff for positive actions.
- ✓ Complete chart audits for compliance.
- ✓ Assign responsibility for each phase of the process.
- ✓ Post reminder signs around the office to encourage action.

Support materials

The tools listed below may be helpful in establishing an asthma diagnosis and treatment approach within your office. Review the list and select the tools that might work best given your staff size and office environment.

- [Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note](#)

A chart flow sheet designed to be used during an asthma visit. It contains asthma assessment questions to help evaluate a patient's level of asthma control. The chart flow sheet can then be used to complete a clinical assessment, track changes, and educate as needed.

- [Asthma Action Plan](#)

A self-management plan that a healthcare provider can individualize for each patient to help manage his or her asthma.

Implementing the process

When thinking through the implementation process, keep in mind the specific roles each person plays.

- Assign a lead person to handle the process for setting up an asthma diagnosis and treatment approach in your office.
- Assign team members who will support the leader.
- Emphasize that you will make small, incremental changes and appreciate feedback from everyone.
- Laminate the chart located on the back of this sheet and post it by each assigned person's office station to use as a quick reference.
- Establish time frames for evaluating the process.

Training Points

Office staff:

- A. Pull chart
- B. When patient with asthma is identified, add Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note to chart

Nurses:

- A1. When visit is chronic care, review self-monitoring materials if applicable and determine specific areas of concern for the patient
- A2. When chief complaint is asthma/wheezing or URI, assess patient for
 - Duration of symptoms
 - Triggers
 - Presence of fever, sputum, URI symptoms
- B. Complete assessment section of SOAP note
- C. Check inhaler and peak flow technique
- D. Assess adherence with prescribed asthma medications and their prescribed dosages
- E. Take spirometry reading if applicable

Physicians:

- A. Review nursing notes
- B. Review history
- C. Complete clinical assessment
- D. Confirm/reassign asthma classification/level of asthma control
- E. Review triggers
- F. Review Asthma Action Plan

Office staff — check out:

- A. Confirm billing — look for diagnoses, modifiers (e.g., emergency visits), spirometry, nebulizers/medications, oxygen saturation, lab work
- B. Copy Asthma Action Plan for chart
- C. Provide additional education material as indicated by nurse or physician
- D. Schedule next visit

Implementing this process takes time. Make small improvements and don't try to change the system all at once.

Take time to look at your whole office system

- How does it function?
- Who is overworked or not utilized well?
- Where are the easiest places to initiate improvement?

If the process needs to be improved, it may mean that specific responsibilities need to be shifted. If the process is working successfully, make it part of the daily routine.

Roles and Responsibilities Guide

The following chart may be used as a quick reference guide to individual roles and responsibilities when implementing an asthma patient identification and treatment process. Post it at individual work stations for easy reference.

WHO	OFFICE STAFF OR NURSE	NURSE	PHYSICIAN	OFFICE STAFF
WHAT	Identify	Assess	Treat	Follow-up
ACTION	<p>New Patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify reason for visit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> If asthma patient, add Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note to chart <p>Diagnosed Patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm patient has asthma Add Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note to chart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fill out patient assessment section of SOAP note <p>New Patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train patient on inhaler and peak flow meter use <p>Diagnosed Patient</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check inhaler technique and peak flow meter use Assess adherence with prescribed asthma medications and their prescribed dosages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review patient assessment Record answers from patient assessment in chart 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review patient assessment section for medication use and control indications Conduct trigger/environmental assessment Review Asthma Action Plan Communicate timing of next visit with patient or caregiver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy Asthma Action Plan and add to chart Schedule next office visit
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asthma Evaluation SOAP Note Asthma Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide additional education material as indicated by nurse or physician