

# ASTHMA & COVID-19

## NMASBHC Tip Sheet - Asthma Series - #2 of 3

Asthma is a long-term lung disease that causes episodes of coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and shortness of breath. Symptoms can be mild or severe, and sometimes life-threatening. Like all chronic illnesses, asthma cannot be cured, but in most cases, asthma is very manageable.

COVID-19 is a respiratory virus. Respiratory viruses are the most common trigger for asthma exacerbation. The medical field is working to fully understand the risks and long-term effects. While individuals with asthma or lung diseases may not be at higher risk for contracting the virus, they may be at greater risk of complications if they do contract COVID-19. There is currently no vaccine available to prevent COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus.

### GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES & TOOLS FOR PATIENTS

- Take everyday precautions to keep appropriate social distance from others. Keep away from crowds and others who are sick when in public spaces.
- Wash hands often with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Follow your [Asthma Action Plan](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c04b8c8419c295cf569869/t/5acf8e6b8a922debac0ee182/1523551855021/ASTHMA+ACTION+PLAN_fillable.pdf).
  - [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c04b8c8419c295cf569869/t/5acf8e6b8a922debac0ee182/1523551855021/ASTHMA+ACTION+PLAN\\_fillable.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59c04b8c8419c295cf569869/t/5acf8e6b8a922debac0ee182/1523551855021/ASTHMA+ACTION+PLAN_fillable.pdf)
- Continue current medication. Do not stop medications or change medication plan without talking to a doctor or primary care provider.
- Avoid known asthma triggers.
- Stock up on supplies - Talk to a healthcare provider about creating an emergency supply of prescription medication, including asthma inhalers.
- Take steps to cope with stress and anxiety, as emotions can trigger an asthma attack.
- Clean and disinfect items that are touched frequently. If possible, have someone who does not have asthma use the cleaning and disinfecting products.
- Talk to a health care provider if there are concerns about masks. For example, discuss the type of mask that may be appropriate or if a rescue inhaler is needed before wearing a mask. Avoid strong fragrances and chemicals – consider a scent- and dye-free detergent when laundering a mask.
- If you or a family member do contract COVID-19, talk to a health care provider about following proper precautions for nebulizer use at home to minimize exposure to members of the household.



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Follow your Asthma Action Plan and know your triggers.

Take precautions - physical distance, wash your hands with soap, wear a mask, clean and disinfect objects you touch frequently.

## RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS:

The following are hyperlinks to useful resources. To find documents with only hyperlinks, please visit the [NMA SBHC Asthma page](#).

### **CDC Guidance on Asthma and Coronavirus**

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

### **Recommendations from the American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology**

<https://acaai.org/news/important-covid-19-information-those-asthma-and-or-allergies>

### **Asthma & Allergy Foundation of America**

<https://www.aafa.org/covid-19-new-coronavirus.aspx>

### **Asthma & Allergy Network COVID-19 Information Center**

<https://allergyasthmanetwork.org/health-a-z/covid-19/>

### **American Lung Association - COVID-19 Myth-busting**

<https://www.lung.org/blog/covid-19-myth-busting>

### **RAMP - Asthma and COVID-19**

<http://www.rampasthma.org/archives/15904>

### **American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology**

<https://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/asthma-library/covid-asthma>

### **Webinar Recording: COVID-19 The New Normal for Asthma - Schools & Business**

<https://allergyasthmanetwork.org/news/covid-19-the-new-normal-for-asthma-schools-business-webinar/>

### **New Mexico Council on Asthma**

<https://www.nmasthma.org>

## ASTHMA & VAPING

The 2017 New Mexico Youth Risk & Resiliency Survey (**NM YRRS**) indicates that 51% of New Mexican youth report having ever used an e-cigarette.

Smoking and vaping also can compromise the respiratory system and leave the body susceptible to lung infections. A person with asthma, who vapes or is around others who vape may be susceptible to medical complications if they contract COVID-19.

