

Recommended action for treatment

See chart below for treatment steps.

- Maintain current step
- Regular follow-ups every one to six months
- Consider step-down if well-controlled for at least three months
- Step-up at least one step and reevaluate in two to six weeks
- For side effects, consider alternative treatment options
- Consider short course of oral systemic corticosteroids
- Step-up one to two steps and reevaluate in two weeks
- For side effects, consider alternative treatment options

Notes

- The stepwise approach is meant to assist, not replace, the clinical decision-making required to meet individual patient needs.
- The level of control is based on the most severe impairment or risk category. Assess impairment domain by patient's/caregiver's recall of previous two to four weeks and by spirometry/peak flow measures. Symptom assessment for longer periods should reflect a global assessment, such as inquiring whether the patient's asthma is better or worse since the last visit.
- At present, there is inadequate data to correspond frequencies of exacerbations with different levels of asthma control. In general, more frequent and intense exacerbations (e.g., requiring urgent, unscheduled care, hospitalization or intensive care unit admission) indicate poorer disease control. For treatment purposes, patients who had less than two exacerbations requiring oral systemic corticosteroids in the past year may be considered the same as patients who have persistent asthma, even in the absence of impairment levels consistent with persistent asthma.
- Before step-up in therapy:
 - Review adherence to medications, inhaler technique, environmental control and co-morbid conditions.
 - If alternative treatment option was used in a step, discontinue it and use preferred treatment for that step.

Stepwise approach for managing asthma in children ages 5 to 11

Intermittent asthma	Persistent asthma: daily medication Consult with asthma specialist if Step 4 care or higher is required. Consider consultation at Step 3.					
Preferred: SABA prn or as needed Alternative: Cromolyn, LTRA, nedocromil or theophylline	Preferred: Step 2 Low-dose ICS Alternative: theophylline	Preferred: Step 3 EITHER: Low-dose ICS + LABA OR Medium-dose ICS + theophylline	Preferred: Step 4 Medium-dose ICS + LABA Alternative: High-dose ICS + either LTRA or theophylline	Preferred: Step 5 High-dose ICS + LABA Alternative: High-dose ICS + either LTRA or theophylline	Preferred: Step 6 High-dose ICS + LABA + oral systemic corticosteroid Alternative: High-dose ICS + theophylline or oral systemic corticosteroid	Step-down if possible If asthma is well controlled for at least three months
	Assess control				Step-up if needed First, check adherence, inhaler technique and co-morbid conditions, environmental control	

Key: Alphabetical order is used when more than one treatment option is listed within either preferred or alternative therapy. ICS, inhaled corticosteroid; LABA, inhaled long-acting beta₂-agonist; LTRA, leukotriene receptor antagonist; SABA, inhaled short-acting beta₂-agonist

Each step: Patient education, environmental control and management of co-morbidities

Steps 2 to 4: Consider subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy for patients who have allergic asthma (see notes).

Quick-relief medication for all patients

- SABA as needed for symptoms. Intensity of treatment depends on severity of symptoms: up to three treatments at 20-minute intervals as needed. Short course of oral systemic corticosteroids may be needed.
- Caution: Increasing use of SABA or use less than two days a week for symptom relief (not prevention of exercise-induced bronchospasm) generally indicates inadequate control and the need to step-up treatment.
- The stepwise approach is meant to assist, not replace, the clinical decision-making required to meet individual patient needs.
- If alternative treatment is used and response is inadequate, discontinue it and use the preferred treatment before stepping up.
- Theophylline is a less desirable alternative due to the need to monitor serum concentration levels.

Notes

- Immunotherapy for Steps 2 to 4 is based on Evidence B for dust mites, animal danders, and pollens; evidence is weak or lacking for molds and cockroaches. Evidence is strongest for immunotherapy with single allergens. The role of allergy in asthma is greater in children than in adults. Clinicians who administer immunotherapy should be prepared and equipped to identify and treat anaphylaxis that may occur.

Key: EIB, exercise-induced bronchospasm; GERD, gastroesophageal reflux disease; FEV₁, forced expiratory volume in one second; FVC, forced vital capacity

Source: www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/

Benefits vary by state. Please refer to the provider manual or the UnitedHealthcare website for applicable benefit information.

Insurance coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company or its affiliates. Health plan coverage provided by UnitedHealthcare of California, UnitedHealthcare of Colorado, Inc., UnitedHealthcare of Oregon, Inc., and UnitedHealthcare of Washington, Inc. or other affiliates. Administrative services provided by United HealthCare Services, Inc. or its affiliates.