



Clinical Practice Guideline 2008 Key Points *Asthma*

Provided by:

Highmark Pulmonary Clinical Quality Improvement Committee

Reviewed by Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield Medical Advisory Committees

Mountain State Blue Cross Blue Shield (MSBCBS), in accordance with its commitment to quality care and in conjunction with the Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield (HBCBS) Pulmonary Quality Improvement Committee, consisting of network Primary Care Physicians and Specialists has adopted the current National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health Guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma as appropriate for use throughout the Mountain State networks.

Selected Clinical Guidelines

The full guideline is available on the following World Wide Web site:

The National Institutes of Health, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute full guideline for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma is available at

www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthgdln.htm "Expert Panel Report 3: Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma". (Item No. 08-4051)

KEY POINTS

Some flexibility in specific cases will require deviations from guideline recommendations. All providers are responsible for individualizing recommendations to the specific clinical characteristics of each patient.

- ***The recommendations for the treatment of asthma are organized around the following four key components of effective asthma management:***
 1. Use of objective measures of lung function, preferably spirometry, to complement patient symptoms in assessing the severity of asthma and in monitoring the course of therapy.
 2. Environmental control measures to avoid or eliminate factors that precipitate asthma symptoms or exacerbations.
 3. Comprehensive pharmacological therapy for long-term management designed to reverse and prevent the airway inflammation characteristics of asthma as well as pharmacological therapy to manage asthma exacerbations.
 4. Patient education that fosters a partnership among the patient, his/her family, and clinicians.
- ***Inhaled corticosteroids*** are preferred anti-inflammatory agent in all levels of asthma
- Remember to record classification of asthma to guide appropriate treatment
- **Goals of Asthma Treatment:**

1. Prevent chronic and troublesome symptoms (e.g., coughing or breathlessness in the night, in the early morning, or after exertion)
2. Maintain (near) "normal" pulmonary function
3. Maintain normal activity levels (including exercise and other physical activity)
4. Prevent recurrent exacerbations of asthma and minimize the need for Emergency Department visits or hospitalizations
 5. Provide optimal pharmacotherapy with minimal or no adverse effects
6. Meet patients' and families' expectations of and satisfaction with asthma care
7. Prevention of airway remodeling

Resources For Your Mountain State Patients

- Blues On CallSM nurse Health Coaches are available 24/7 to provide one-on-one telephonic support for patients regarding asthma and many other health topics. Your Mountain State patients can reach Blues On Call at 1-888-258-3428 (1-888-BLUE-428) toll free.
- On-line "Improve Your Health" programs are available at www.mybenefitshome.com
 - HealthMedia[®] Balance[™]* – A weight management program
 - HealthMedia[®] Nourish[™]* – A nutrition program
 - HealthMedia[®] Breathe[™]* – A smoking cessation program
 - HealthMedia[®] Relax[™]* – A stress management program
 - HealthMedia[®] Care[™] For Your Health* – A self management program for chronic conditions

To access Mountain State's "Improve Your Health" programs:

- Direct your Mountain State patients to go to Mountain State's member website at www.mybenefitshome.com
- Log in to the member website. Not registered? Select "click here to get a password"
- HealthMedia programs can be found by clicking the tab heading on the top of the home page called "Your Health" and then selecting "Improve Your Health" from the list of topics on the left side of the page.

As with any insurance, members are eligible for services only as long as they are active members of the plan and the services are covered benefits of their group or direct pay contract.