



Guide to Managing Asthma at Work

For some, asthma can become a minor nuisance. But for others, it can have a debilitating effect on their everyday life, especially at work. Asthma is often considered as a manageable disease, and to some extent it is.

But people with severe asthma often find it very difficult to manage their asthma at work. Unlike at home, you have less control at work over the exposure to certain irritants and allergens that could trigger your asthma. If not addressed properly, it may lead to a life-threatening asthma attack.

Although asthma can't be cured, there are ways to control the symptoms. Here are 4 ways to manage asthma at work.

Talk To Your Employer

You're not obliged to inform your employer about your asthma but doing so will help you in the long run. For example, if you need time off to schedule appointments or if you're unwell with your asthma, your employer will be more understanding if they know about your long-term condition.

Get Rid Of Workplace Triggers

If you're aware of certain workplace factors that trigger your asthma, speak to someone in Human Resources (HR) to tackle this issue. They will help in making reasonable adjustments to protect you from these triggers. For example, if you

work in a dusty area in the office, they might be willing to move you to a different part of the office.

However, some workplace triggers are not possible to get rid of, such as fumes or smoke in a factory, dust in the warehouse or air conditioning in the office. If you feel that these triggers are really affecting your health, it might be worth considering looking for a new job. Also, speak to your doctor about making changes in your medicines to help you carry on working.

Make An Asthma Action Plan

A written asthma action plan will help you recognise any signs of worsening asthma and tell you or your colleagues what to do in case of an asthma attack. Your action plan should include:

- A list of your usual asthma medicines and doses
- Detailed instructions on what to do when asthma is getting worse. This should include taking any extra doses or medicines and any emergency contacts of doctors or hospitals.
- Instructions on what to do in an asthma emergency.
- Location of your reliever inhaler.
- The name of the doctor or other health specialists who prepared the plan with you.
- The date.

Inform Your Colleagues About Your Asthma

If you feel comfortable, open up to your colleagues about asthma and explain what they will need to do in case you have an asthma attack. Give them a photocopy or text a photo of your asthma action plan so they know what to do in an emergency.