

Asthma Program Overview

We strive to improve preventive care for children and adolescents with asthma by partnering and increasing collaboration with providers. MeridianHealth (Meridian) provides education and coordination for our members with asthma.

Meridian is implementing an asthma program for members to help the identified asthma population manage and understand their asthma symptoms through education and outreach.

Meridian also offers a Care Coordination program focused on children with special healthcare needs. The program focuses on members deemed eligible for the State of Michigan's Children's Special Health Care Services (CSHCS) program. Members may be eligible for this program based on age, clinical diagnosis, severity, specialty care, and clinical review. Asthma is a diagnosis that may qualify an individual as eligible for the CSHCS Program. The purpose of CSHCS Care Coordination is to connect members to appropriate services and resources in a coordinated effort, ensure access to care, and assist with navigating the healthcare system.

Meridian recommends additional preventive measures, such as vaccinations, routine checkups, and education on early signs of illness and self-management.

When do I refer a patient to a pulmonologist?

Referral to a specialist in asthma care is recommended by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) guidelines if:

- Patient has had a life-threatening asthma exacerbation
- Patient is not meeting the goals of asthma therapy after 3–6 months of treatment
 - An earlier referral or consultation is appropriate if the patient is unresponsive to therapy
- Signs and symptoms are atypical, or there are problems in differential diagnosis
- Other conditions complicate asthma or its diagnosis
 - e.g., sinusitis, nasal polyps, aspergillosis, severe rhinitis, VCD, GERD, COPD
- Additional diagnostic testing is indicated
 - e.g., allergy skin testing, rhinoscopy, complete pulmonary function studies, provocative challenge, bronchoscopy
- Patient requires additional education and guidance on complications of therapy, problems with adherence, or allergen avoidance
- Patient is being considered for immunotherapy
- Patient requires step 4 care or higher (step 3 for children 0–4 years of age)
 - Consider referral if patient requires step 3 care (step 2 for children 0–4 years of age)
- Patient has required more than two bursts of oral corticosteroids in one year or has an exacerbation requiring hospitalization
- Patient requires confirmation of a history that suggests that an occupational or environmental inhalant or ingested substance is provoking or contributing to asthma

For more information: getastmahelp.org/refer-to-specialist.aspx

> Asthma Program Overview

Spacers for Asthma Patients

Meridian covers up to four spacers for each patient per year from the pharmacy. Both spacers and education on how to use them are important for our pediatric asthma population to ensure medication adherence and administration. Many spacer brands are on the Meridian formulary, so prescribing is also easy, just write “spacer or valved-holding chamber.”

When a patient does not use his or her spacer properly, or not at all, he or she can be at risk for not receiving the full dose of the prescribed medication when it’s needed most. Meridian recommends checking each patient’s inhaler and spacer technique at each visit so you can provide any feedback for improvement. With the right information and oversight, we can make sure that each patient knows the correct way to use his or her spacer and inhaler.

If your patients require any assistance obtaining a spacer at the pharmacy, need a ride to and from your office or the pharmacy, or have any other questions, please direct them to call Meridian.

For more information:

- www.cdc.gov/asthma
- getastmahelp.org/spacer-valved-holding-chamber-access.aspx
- getastmahelp.org/spacer-holding.aspx
- getastmahelp.org/asthma-health-professional-main.aspx

How can Meridian help?

To schedule transportation for your Meridian patients, call **888-437-0606**.

To find a pharmacy, visit meridianrx.com/en/pharmacy-lookup.