

HealthSmart

Advice from **The Doctors**

Keeping your asthma under control



IAN HOOD/GETTY IMAGES

IF YOU COUGH, wheeze and find it hard to breathe, you might be among the almost 25 million Americans who have asthma. There's no cure, but with the right treatment plan and a few healthy habits, you can minimize symptoms, prevent attacks and improve your quality of life. Some steps to help you take control:

Use inhalers properly. Researchers at the University of Chicago found that many asthma patients misuse both their long-term inhalers (that help keep symptoms under control) and rescue inhalers (used to provide quick, temporary relief of severe symptoms) up to 90% of the time. The most common mistake: failing to fully breathe out

Watch video on this topic from *The Doctors* at usaweekend.com

wheezing, coughing or breathing problems disturb sleep or activities such as work and exercise; note any chest tightness or pain; and see how often you need your quick-relief inhaler.

Avoid your triggers. Common ones include mold, pets, dust, grasses, pollen, cockroaches and smoke from cigarettes.

Go easy on the burgers. Kids who eat three or more a week could be at a higher risk for asthma and wheezing, according to a large international study. Foods high in saturated fat may cause an immune response that worsens symptoms. A healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables and fish seems to stave off risk. **EQ**

THE DOCTORS is an Emmy-winning daytime TV show with pediatrician Jim Sears, OB-GYN Lisa Masterson, ER physician Travis Stork and plastic surgeon Andrew Ordon. Check listings.