



Press Release

## AAFA Responds to New Updates of Federal Asthma Management Guidelines

*National Institutes of Health releases new recommendations for first time in over a decade; new guidelines shift approach for asthma diagnosis, management, and treatment in the U.S.*



Washington D.C., December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 — [2020 Focused Updates to the Asthma Management Guidelines](#) produced by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is the new script that will help doctors and patients make decisions about care. Some updates are significant. These are the first changes in 13 years to federal guidelines for children and adults with asthma.

The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) is committed to supporting the rollout of this new guidance to continue to make health information clear and accessible for the community it serves.

The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), part of the NIH, oversaw the National Asthma Education Prevention Program Coordinating Committee (NAEPPCC) and a 19-member expert panel working group to finalize the latest guidelines. The Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA) serves on the NAEPPCC and played a pivotal role in making sure the patient voice is included.

The new guidance, published in the [Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology](#), gives updated recommendations in six main areas:

1. Use of inhaled steroids when needed for recurring wheezing and persistent asthma
2. When to use long-acting bronchodilators instead of long-acting muscarinic antagonists
3. Use of allergy shots for treating some people with allergic asthma
4. Use of multiple methods to cut down exposure to indoor asthma triggers
5. Testing for nitric oxide exhaled from the lungs for difficult-to-diagnose asthma cases. The gas shows an increase in the presence of inflammation
6. Use of a minimally invasive surgical procedure known as bronchial thermoplasty to help treat some adults with uncontrolled, moderate to severe, persistent asthma

“AAFA commends the NIH and working group for getting these much-needed recommendations released. AAFA played a critical role in overseeing the development of the guidelines and sharing input. We’re glad to see these contributions paying off,” said Kenneth Mendez, CEO and president of AAFA. “Some of these updates represent a monumental shift in how asthma is currently diagnosed and treated. For example, the recommendations for some people with asthma will change how and when they use inhaler medicines. While the guidelines mention but do not include more recent therapeutics known as biologics, we understand there will be more to come on this with future updates as these drugs exploded onto the market after the recommendations coming



out now were already in development. There's always room to go further as doctors and researchers continue to learn more about how to treat asthma. Our close work with the NIH on behalf of patients will continue. We'll be working hard to make sure our community understands and can fully digest this information when making health care decisions with their doctors."

"These new guidelines aim to improve outcomes by reducing asthma attacks and reducing lifetime exposure to corticosteroids. The updates also provide guidance on limiting asthma triggers in the home for those with symptoms or reactions to specific allergens including dust mites and pests. AAFA works hard to support effective environmental control through our [CERTIFIED asthma & allergy friendly®](#) program," said Melanie Carver, chief mission officer at AAFA. "In alignment with the new guidelines, this program helps support a multi-component strategy to reduce or eliminate certain asthma and allergy triggers found in homes and other indoor spaces."

AAFA is publishing additional educational materials along with an easy-to-follow chart people living with asthma can use to compare old guidelines to new, current guidelines. This can help people have conversations with their doctors to decide if their treatment plans should change. AAFA resources and updates can be found at [aafa.org](http://aafa.org).

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**About AAFA**

Founded in 1953, AAFA is the oldest and largest non-profit patient organization dedicated to saving lives and reducing the burden of disease for people with asthma, allergies and related conditions through research, education, advocacy and support. AAFA offers extensive support for individuals and families affected by asthma and allergic diseases, such as food allergies and atopic dermatitis (eczema). Through its online patient support communities, network of local chapters and affiliated support groups, AAFA empowers patients and their families by providing practical, evidence-based information and community programs and services. AAFA is the only asthma and allergy patient advocacy group that is certified to meet the standards of excellence set by the National Health Council. For more information, visit [www.aafa.org](http://www.aafa.org).