

**SIGN 141 • British guideline on the
management of asthma
2014 update**
A national clinical guideline



An update to the British guideline on the management of asthma will be published on the SIGN (www.sign.ac.uk) and British Thoracic Society (www.brit-thoracic.org.uk) websites on 8 October 2014.

Background

Produced jointly by SIGN and the British Thoracic Society (BTS) since 2003, sections of the guideline are updated biennially. The 2014 update covers all sections of the guideline except diagnosis/monitoring and asthma in adolescents and includes complete revisions of the sections on supported self-management and organisation and delivery of care, and extensive revisions to the section on non-pharmacological management of asthma.

A new section highlighting the key recommendations for implementation has also been added. It is hoped that this asthma guideline continues to serve as a basis for high quality management of both acute and chronic asthma and a stimulus for research into areas of management for which there is little evidence.

Sections of the guideline will continue to be updated on the BTS and SIGN websites on a biennial basis.

Key messages from the 2014 update include:

- All people with asthma (and/or their parents or carers) should be offered self-management education which should include a written personalised asthma action plan and be supported by regular professional review
- Adherence to long-term asthma treatment should be routinely and regularly addressed by all healthcare professionals within the context of a comprehensive programme of accessible proactive asthma care
- Measures to reduce in utero or early life exposure to single aeroallergens, such as house dust mites or pets, or single food allergens, are not recommended for the primary prevention of asthma
- Physical and chemical methods of reducing house dust mite levels in the home (including acaricides, mattress covers, vacuum-cleaning, heating, ventilation, freezing, washing, air-filtration and ionisers) are ineffective and should not be recommended by healthcare professionals
- Nebulised magnesium sulphate is not recommended for treatment in adults with acute asthma or for the initial treatment of children aged two years and over with mild to moderate asthma attacks
- If leukotriene receptor antagonists are required to achieve adequate control of asthma then they should not be withheld during pregnancy
- A multi-faceted approach to school-based asthma education programmes targeting children's health professionals as well as the children themselves should be considered.

Target users of the guideline

This guideline will be of interest to healthcare professionals involved in the care of people with asthma.

The target users are, however, much broader than this, and include people with asthma, their parents/carers and those who interact with people with asthma outside of the NHS, such as teachers. It will also be of interest to those planning the delivery of services in the NHS in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Implementing this guideline

The implementation strategy for this guideline encompasses:

- identification of the key recommendations that should be prioritised for implementation
- guideline and supporting materials available to download from the SIGN and BTS websites
- dissemination of a quick reference guide to all appropriate healthcare professionals
- electronic dissemination of the full guideline to all NHS boards
- patient booklets on managing asthma in adults and in children
- iPhone, iPad and Android apps.

The updated SIGN/BTS British guideline on the management of asthma will be published as a supplement to Thorax on 8 October 2014.



**Publication
8 October 2014**