



MANAGING YOUR SEVERE EOSINOPHILIC ASTHMA

Lifestyle tips to manage your disease at work

You may find it difficult to explain severe eosinophilic asthma to your manager or colleagues and get the support you would like. You may have several appointments to attend or require other accommodations.



This brochure is divided into 4 sections, providing lifestyle tips that could help you manage the symptoms of severe eosinophilic asthma in your workplace:

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**DISCUSSING YOUR SEVERE EOSINOPHILIC
ASTHMA WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES**



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**MANAGING SYMPTOMS
AT WORK**



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**MANAGING YOUR WORKLOAD AND
JOB-RELATED TASKS**



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**MANAGING YOUR SEVERE EOSINOPHILIC
ASTHMA DURING WORK-RELATED TRAVEL**

Discussing your severe eosinophilic asthma with your colleagues

Honest and open conversations may help other people understand your asthma and offer support. It can often feel as though you are facing your situation alone. But your colleagues can be understanding and supportive if they know what you may need. Below are some ways you can have helpful conversations with them.

Be open and honest

Explain what severe eosinophilic asthma is like in simple terms. You could also use an example to do so—for instance, feeling breathless—to help illustrate the challenges you face.

Be clear about what you need

It's worth remembering that people often want to help, but just don't know how. An honest conversation about your asthma can improve their understanding and help them know what support to give you at work.

Try conversation starters like...

"Have you got time for a chat about my asthma? I would really appreciate your help with something..."



Discussing your severe eosinophilic asthma with your colleagues

Help your manager understand severe eosinophilic asthma

Talking openly about your asthma can help your manager (and others) understand that you don't have "just asthma," but severe asthma. It may not be an easy conversation, but if your manager understands more about your condition and treatment, they may see the benefit of supporting your health needs.

Remember to be open with your manager about any changes you need to get your job done. They may be able to arrange an assessment of your workspace by an occupational therapist (OT), for example. The OT may introduce equipment and make adjustments to make work easier.

Ask trusting colleagues for help

You don't need to tell everyone you work with about your asthma. But trusted coworkers can offer support and understanding in lots of ways. They might offer practical help, such as:

- Attending a meeting on your behalf or sharing tasks with you.
- Being a sympathetic listener if you're having a bad day.

These relationships work both ways. Nobody should feel like a nuisance for asking others for support. We all need help occasionally.



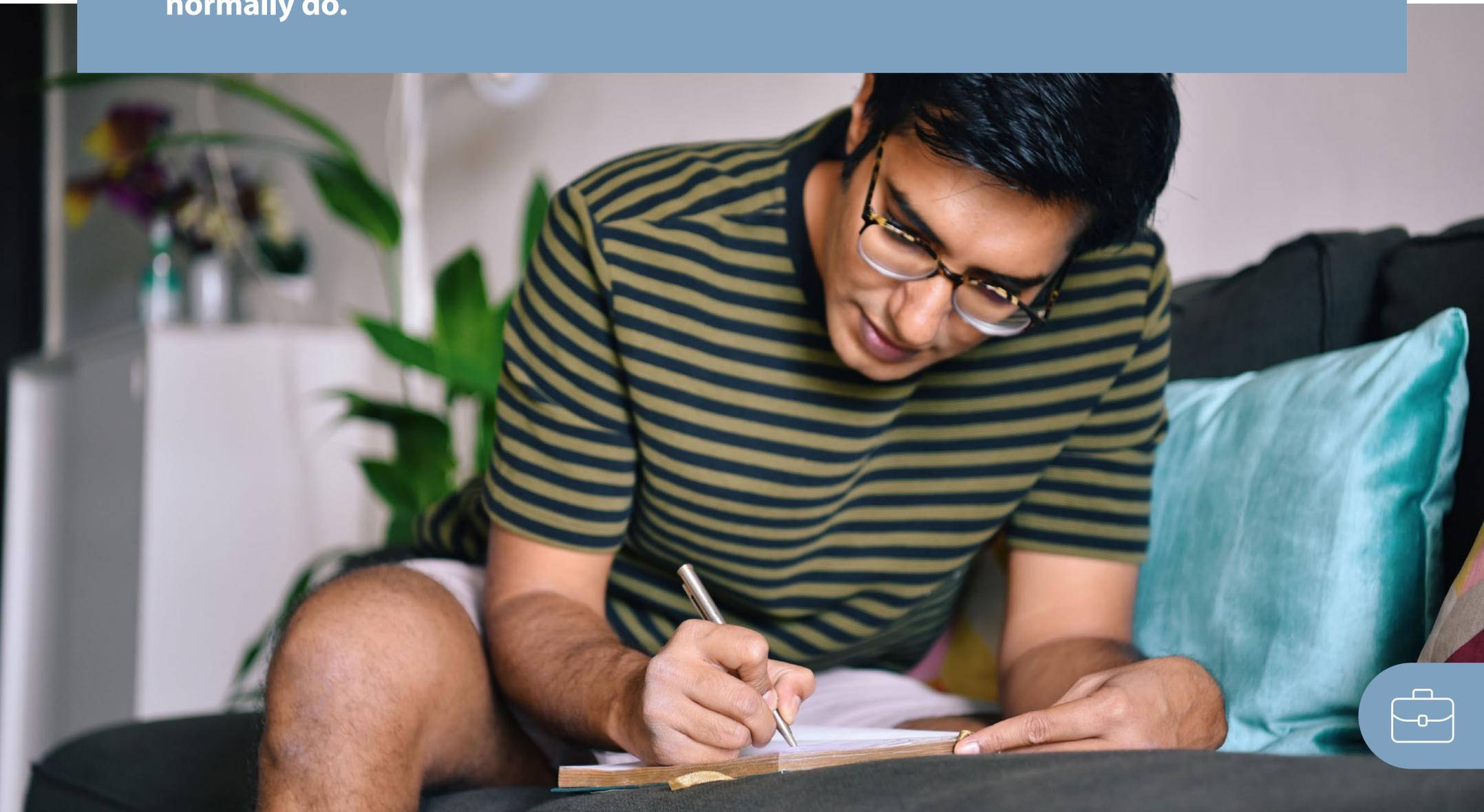
Managing symptoms at work

Severe eosinophilic asthma presents many challenges. But there are several ways you can tackle this! Below you can find some useful tips for managing your asthma-related symptoms at work:

Have your own health-boost checklist

- Try to build a little physical activity into your day; at your office, try standing when you'd otherwise be sitting, such as during a phone call.
- If your diet is low on nutrient-boosting fruits and vegetables, but a menu overhaul feels too difficult, aim to add just one extra portion each day. And remember to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.
- If you're a smoker, you may be tired of hearing this, but smoking really won't help your asthma. You do need to stop completely, but if this feels impossible right now, you could work towards cutting down. We wish there was a miracle fix, but quitting is going to take hard work and commitment. Many people do succeed, and you can, too.

- **Try standing when you'd otherwise be sitting, such as during a phone call.**
- **Aim to add just one extra portion of fruits and vegetables each day.**
- **If you have a habit of smoking, start by smoking one less cigarette than you normally do.**



Managing symptoms at work

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Address your stress

Take time to work out what causes you to feel stressed and if it might be possible to make changes that ease or remove those burdens from your work environment.

Consider the following questions. Are you:

- Taking on too much at work?
- Setting unrealistically high standards for yourself?

Identifying and addressing your stress triggers can help you move past them and thrive, even in challenging times.

What are my stress triggers?

Use past challenges to help solve new ones

When faced with a particularly difficult challenge at your workplace, try looking back and remembering how you dealt with similar challenges successfully in the past. Perhaps you can apply what happened back then to help with what's happening now. Try to make the voice in your head a reassuring one.

What were some of the past challenges that I overcame?

Break down bigger tasks

Split bigger tasks into a series of bite-sized steps that can be tackled one at a time. The step-by-step, incremental process of pacing helps make tasks more manageable.



Managing symptoms at work

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Take regular breaks

Give yourself regular short breaks while working, even if you don't feel tired. You may want to push on but giving yourself more time may mean your energy lasts longer.

Create contingency plans

Asthma is unpredictable. But there are some things you do know about in advance, such as doctor's appointments and treatment times.

If you need time off for an appointment, let your manager know as soon as possible.

If you think it might cause a problem, try to present a solution—such as swapping shifts with someone else—to show the work will still get done.

For a tiring day coming up:

- **Think of ways to get some work done in advance**
- **Request a deadline extension**



Managing your workload and job-related tasks

People with severe eosinophilic asthma, your type of asthma, may experience symptoms during work.

The following lifestyle tips may help you manage your asthma at work.

Set small, achievable goals

One lifestyle tip that may be useful to you is to set yourself very small goals by breaking down large tasks at work. This can help you feel good about yourself. If you start with small, achievable goals and experience success, it can motivate you to continue setting goals.

Consider a new style of to-do list

Avoid putting pressure on yourself with a long to-do list. Instead, break your list down into a task that you absolutely *must* do, a task that you would *like* to do, and finally a task that you *could* do if energy allows.

The way to tackle your list is this:

- First, focus your energy on the must-do task as this is the most important.
- Second, do the task you'd like to do, to make sure your day includes an enjoyable activity.
- Finally, if you feel ready to take a time out, ignore the task you "could do" as it wasn't necessary anyway.

So remember, your three tasks are: Must Do, Would Like to Do and Could Do. This new style of to-do list should help you keep a steady pace without using up all of your energy reserves.

Ask for practical help when you need it

It can be difficult to ask for practical help, but asking others for help today allows them to ask you for help in the future. Being able to help others is a sure-fire confidence-builder.



Managing your workload and job-related tasks

Stop before you feel tired

Stopping *before* you feel tired will save you from over-exerting yourself. For example, if you go out with friends, it's a good idea to set yourself a time to leave even if you feel you could carry on. Tell your friends in advance so they can support you and help you stick to your plan. Don't think of it as missing out—instead, think of it as taking good care of yourself.

Be kind to yourself

Using up mental energy with worry, guilt and self-critical thoughts is tiring. So, try to notice if you might be judging yourself harshly. Instead, try treating yourself the way you might treat a close friend in the same situation as you. Show yourself empathy and understanding for the things you can't yet do and celebrate the small steps that you *are* managing. Don't put pressure on yourself to do more than you're ready for. If all you can manage is a short walk, that's okay.

Remember your strength

When you feel a little down or vulnerable, take time to remember just what strength you've shown to get this far. A glass-half-full attitude really is better for you.

What can I be proud of?

Remember, you're not alone. There is always support available from professionals and peers. Speak to your doctor or the Connect360° Program for advice on where to get the help you need.



Managing your severe eosinophilic asthma during work-related travel

Travelling takes a little extra thought when you have severe eosinophilic asthma, your type of asthma. But as long as your doctor has told you it's safe to travel, there's no reason why you can't make a short work-related trip if required! Following are a list of small reminders and useful tips for your journey:

Make an up-to-date asthma action plan

If you do need medical attention while you're away, you can hand this straight to the doctor. Alternatively, you can request a letter from your doctor, outlining your diagnosis and treatments.

Have a list of contact numbers

These may include your doctor, other members of your healthcare team, the Connect360° Program, travel and/or health insurers, local travel representative and the local medical centre or hospital close to the place of your stay. Store these on your phone, back them up online and write them down, too.



Keep an ICE card

An ICE (In Case of Emergency) card lists basic personal and medical information, including your name, next-of-kin contact details, blood group, health conditions, medication and any allergies. This is so first responders, such as paramedics, can act swiftly in an emergency. You can make your own or buy one online. Keep it somewhere obvious, such as in a jacket pocket or around your neck.



Managing your severe eosinophilic asthma during work-related travel

Keep your travel insurance documents ready

Organize insurance as soon as you book your trip, and make sure it covers any needs related to your severe eosinophilic asthma. You may wish to check the cost of travel insurance before you book your destination in case the location affects the price.

Carry adaptor plugs if required

Check the socket and voltage information of your destination before you travel and remember to take enough plugs for your various needs.

Carry a travel-sized first aid kit

A basic first aid kit should contain antiseptic, painkillers, gauze, sterile dressings, bandage tape, plasters, tweezers, scissors, a thermometer, insect repellent and sunscreen.

Pack light

It pays to pack light, so look for ways to reduce the weight of your luggage. Check what's already provided at your accommodation. If you need to take your own towels, for example, opt for microfibre ones.

Store documents digitally

Store digital versions of your travel documents, asthma action plan or doctor's letter, prescriptions, insurance details and a photograph of your passport in a secure space online. That way, you can access them even if you lose the printed documents.

Download a translation app

Going abroad and don't know the language? Download a translation app or pack a phrase book. Write down a few key medical phrases, just in case.



Managing your severe eosinophilic asthma during work-related travel

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The Connect360° Program is here to help you!

The Connect360° Program was developed to help guide you on your asthma journey by providing practical resources and personalized one-on-one support. Contact the Connect360° Program to find out more.



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