10 Tips Every Asthma Patient Should Know During COVID-19

1. **Follow your asthma treatment plan.**
   Every asthma patient should work with their healthcare provider to create an asthma treatment plan. This plan tells you what medication(s) to take and when, depending on the frequency and severity of your symptoms, and when to seek medical attention if the symptoms aren't resolving.

2. **Don't change your asthma plan without consulting your healthcare provider.**
   There has been a lot of misinformation circulating on the internet about certain medications like steroid inhalers increasing the risk of contracting COVID-19, which has led to many patients discontinuing or altering the medications on their asthma treatment plan. If you're considering a change to your asthma treatment plan, make sure you consult your healthcare provider before you make any changes.

3. **Ensure you have enough medication.**
   Work with your pharmacist and health care provider to keep an emergency supply of all of your asthma medications on hand so you don't run the risk of running out. Carry your inhaler with you every day, in case your asthma symptoms flare up.

4. **Don't be afraid to seek medical attention**
   If you're experiencing asthma symptoms that aren't responding to your asthma treatment plan, including shortness of breath, wheezing, chest tightness, dizziness or rapid breathing, seek medical attention as soon as possible, since early intervention can often prevent serious or even life-threatening complications. It's also important to seek immediate medical attention if you're experiencing symptoms that could indicate a COVID-19 infection, including a fever, cough, shortness of breath, diarrhea or loss of taste or smell.

5. **Take every precaution to prevent an infection.**
   By wearing a mask, washing your hands frequently, not touching your face, frequently disinfecting hard surfaces and practicing social distancing, you'll minimize your chance of suffering from the coronavirus and the complications it can cause.

6. **Get as much fresh air as possible.**
   COVID-19 is more likely to spread when people are in closed spaces because droplets take longer to dissipate when there is limited space and a lack of natural ventilation. Closed spaces pose a risk to asthma patients who are frequently using chemical sprays to disinfect indoor spaces, since being in close contact with these sprays can irritate the airways and trigger an asthma attack.
   For these reasons, it's helpful to get as much fresh air as possible (while following social distancing guidelines, of course!), and keep doors and windows open as much as possible, especially while using disinfectant sprays and other cleaning products.

7. **Follow guidelines for vulnerable populations.**

8. **Avoid unnecessary travel.**

9. **Avoid your asthma triggers.**
   In many cases, asthma symptoms are induced by exposure to certain triggers, including smoke, pet dander, dust, mold and pollen. It's important to stay healthy by recognizing and avoiding your asthma triggers as much as possible.

10. **Learn how to decrease your stress and anxiety.**
    The COVID-19 pandemic has led to an increase in stress, fear and anxiety around the world. Since strong emotions can trigger an asthma attack, it's helpful for patients with asthma to be aware of their emotional state, and find ways to cope with strong emotions. Meditation, mindful breathing, exercise, nutritious food, connection with family and friends and a healthy sleep pattern are all helpful ways to calm your body and mind in the midst of a stressful situation.
    Also, if you're experiencing strong emotions that don't respond to your efforts, don't be afraid to seek help from a professional to find other ways to improve your mental health.

Please call 905-456-7111 ext 2 to schedule a consult with the Respiratory Therapist.

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