



## COVID-19 and Asthma



### How common is asthma?

Asthma is a very common non-communicable disease affecting both children and adults. It is estimated that around 300 million people suffer from asthma worldwide, and this number is considered to rapidly increase within the next years. The good news is that asthma can be pharmaceutically controlled and has relatively low mortality compared with other chronic diseases.

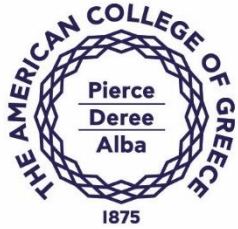
### Are people with asthma a high risk group for Covid-19?

According to WHO (World Health Organisation) and ECDC (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control), moderate to severe **asthma is a risk factor** for severe illness of Covid-19.

On the other side, some clinical investigations have showed that asthma isn't considered to be a risk factor, but elderly age and high number of comorbidities are mainly associated with severe patients. What we know for sure is that Covid-19 can deregulate your respiratory disease, especially when it is not properly controlled and you do not maintain a good level of respiratory health.

### How can I tell the difference between asthma and Covid-19 symptoms?

Covid-19 pandemic happens to coincide with allergy season. People with allergic profile that suffer from asthma, are usually familiar to symptoms occurring this time of year, such as runny nose, sneezing, cough, wheezing, shortness of breath, headache, rashes and itchy or watering eyes. The main symptoms of Covid-19 are fever, dry cough and shortness of breath, while in some cases body aches, nasal congestion, sore throat and diarrhea can occur. While some symptoms of allergies, asthma and Covid-19 can be similar, **fever** can be a big distinction.



## How can I protect myself from Covid-19 if I have asthma?

The most important thing to do for people with asthma is to keep taking their controller medications in order to **keep asthma under control**. There have been several reports that steroids are contraindicated in Covid-19, so many patients are worried about their inhaled steroid. There is no evidence that inhaled steroid can cause immune suppression, so it's important to follow your asthma action plan, as prescribed by your doctor. Of course, always remember to stay home as much as possible during the pandemic, practice social distancing, avoid contact with sick people and follow all the hygiene rules.

## I have asthma and I am afraid I got Covid-19. What should I do?

In case you develop symptoms of Covid -19, call **your doctor or EODY** and ask them about your symptoms. Let them know that you have asthma and that you're getting Covid-19 symptoms and they will guide you about the next steps you need to take.

## Help if you are feeling anxious

The current situation of Covid-19 pandemic has changed everyone's life and people with asthma can get very anxious and worried about Covid-19. Here are some ways to stay strong and look after your self during the pandemic:

- Try to get some regular **exercise**, as it both helps with your asthma symptoms and boosts your mood.
- Eat healthy**. Consume a lot of fruit and vegetables, avoid sugar and watch out for bad habits like smoking and alcohol.
- Meditate** and practice diaphragmatic breathing to help you relax.
- Sleep** enough hours everyday.
- Only look at **reliable sources of information**.
- Stay connected with **friends and family** and share your worries.

