



Royal College
of Physicians

National Respiratory Audit
Programme (NRAP)



**What you need
to know:**
a guide for young
adults with
asthma starting
university

Heading off to university is a huge and exciting step, filled with new experiences and challenges. For young adults with asthma, it is important to be prepared and proactive in managing your condition so that you can make the most of university life. This guide provides essential information and tips to help you to stay well and confident during your studies.

To do

Before you leave for university

- > Register with a GP local to your university accommodation.
- > Review your asthma action plan.
- > Order enough medication for your first few weeks.

While you are at university

- > Always carry your MART or reliever inhaler.
- > Identify and note any new triggers.
- > Teach your friends how to respond if you have an asthma attack.

Registering with a local GP

One of the first things you should do when preparing for university is to register with a local GP. Even if you're feeling well, it's important to have access to healthcare in case of emergencies or if you need a new asthma prescription. Make sure the GP is aware of your asthma history and any medications you are taking. You can [find local GPs online](#).

Reviewing your asthma action plan

- > Your personalised asthma action plan should be reviewed before starting university.
- > If you don't have one, ask your GP or asthma nurse to create one with you.
- > Make sure it includes your triggers, medication, what to do if your symptoms worsen and when to seek medical help.

Medication management

- > Make sure that you have a good supply of your inhalers and any other asthma medications before leaving for university.
- > Find out how to order repeat prescriptions at your new GP surgery.

Always carry your reliever therapy inhaler with you, not just in your accommodation – this might be your MART (maintenance and reliever therapy), AIR (anti-inflammatory and reliever), or now less frequently used blue inhaler.

Now that you are 18+ years-old, you'll need to pay for prescriptions if you are in England (these are free in Wales and Scotland). If you take several medications, it can be cheaper to buy a [prescription prepayment certificate \(PPC\)](#).

Accommodation tips

- > University halls may have triggers such as dust or mould. Let your flatmates know that you have asthma, how they can help in an emergency and where you keep your inhaler.

Social life and triggers

- > Be aware that smoke, vaping and crowded venues can be triggers. Don't be afraid to step outside if you are struggling to breathe.
- > University is a great time to try new sports – just remember to use your inhaler as prescribed and warm up properly.
- > Moving away from home can be stressful, which may affect your asthma. Try to manage your stress and seek support if you need it.
- > Your university's accessibility services can offer catch-ups for support and reducing anxiety.



Preparing for an emergency

- > Make sure that you know what to do if your asthma gets worse.
- > Save emergency numbers in your phone and know the location of the nearest hospital or urgent care centre.
- > Let your friends know how to recognise an asthma attack and how to help.

Studying at the university

- > Note that some substances that you work with might trigger your asthma – particularly if you study for a subject where you will be exposed to animals, chemicals, aerosols, paint, powders etc.
- > If any of the exposures make your asthma worse, make sure that you discuss it with your course leader and get referred to Occupational Health for further assessment.
- > Tell your university tutor about your asthma and how this may impact you.

Avoiding freshers' flu and other illnesses

- > Get your annual flu jab.
- > If you didn't receive Men ACWY vaccination at the age of 13–14, make sure that you receive it before starting university.
- > Practise good hand hygiene.
- > See your GP if you notice your asthma worsening when you're unwell.

With a bit of planning and awareness, you can manage your asthma and fully embrace university life.

Remember, you're not alone – reach out for support when you need it and take care of your health as you start this exciting new chapter.





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