



Classification of Asthma Severity

STEP Classification	Clinical Features Before Treatment*		
	Symptoms†	Nocturnal Symptoms	Lung Function
STEP 4 Severe persistent	Continual symptoms Limited physical activity Frequent exacerbations	Frequent	FEV ₁ or PEF <60% predicted PEF variability >30 %
STEP 3 Moderate persistent	Daily symptoms Daily use of inhaled short-acting β ₂ -agonist Exacerbations may affect activity Exacerbations ≥2 per week; may last days	>1 per week	FEV ₁ or PEF >60%-<80% predicted PEF variability >30%
STEP 2 Mild persistent	Symptoms >2 per week but <1 per day Exacerbations may affect activity	>2 per month	FEV ₁ or PEF ≥80% predicted PEF variability 20%-30%
STEP 1 Mild intermittent	Symptoms ≤2 per week Asymptomatic and normal PEF between exacerbations Exacerbations brief (a few hours to a few days); intensity may vary	≤2 per month	FEV ₁ or PEF ≥80% predicted PEF variability <20%

The presence of one of the features of severity is sufficient to place a patient in that category. Assign patient to the most severe grade in which any feature occurs. The characteristics noted in this figure are general and may overlap because asthma is highly variable. Furthermore, an individual's classification may change over time.

† Patients at any level of severity can have mild, moderate, or severe exacerbations. Some patients with intermittent asthma experience severe, life-threatening exacerbations separated by long periods of normal lung function and no symptoms.

PEF = peak expiratory flow.

Adapted from

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<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/asthma/asthqdln.pdf>