

Seven in ten people with asthma could be using less medication

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Seven out of ten Australians with asthma aged over 12 years may be prescribed too much preventer medicine. In *Australian Prescriber* Prof. Helen Reddel and coauthors from the Woolcock Institute of Medical

Research write about finding the lowest effective dose to control asthma.

From the 2021 Census, we know that over 2 million Australians have asthma. It is one of the three most common long-term health conditions in Australia. Using medicines wisely is important to live well with asthma.

"There are lots of reasons why you may be using a higher dose of asthma preventer medicine than you need," says Prof. Reddel.

"If your asthma has been stable for more than three months, check with your doctor. It may be possible to reduce the dose."

This can sometimes save you money. Providing your [treatment](#) is still preventing asthma flare-ups, it can also lower the chance of uncommon side effects like cataracts and brittle bones.

"With asthma, it is not a case of 'one size fits all,'" says Prof. Reddel.

"The medicines and doses needed are personalized for each patient.

"For example, if you have very mild asthma, you may not need to take a preventer medicine regularly. There are new Australian guidelines about a puffer that you can use only when you have symptoms, that relieves symptoms and also includes a preventer medicine.

"Do not stop taking preventer medicine without [medical advice](#). Your doctor can check your asthma medicines and update your [asthma](#) action plan," she says.

More information: Helen K Reddel et al, How to step down asthma preventer treatment in patients with well-controlled asthma—more is not always better, *Australian Prescriber* (2022). [DOI:](#)

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