Stepwise Approach for Managing Asthma in Youths ≥ 12 Years of Age and Adults

Step 1
Preferred: SABA
As needed

Step 2
Preferred: Low-dose ICS
Alternative: Cromolyn, LTRA, Nedocromil, or Theophylline

Step 3
Preferred: Low-dose ICS + LABA
Alternative: Medium-dose ICS + either LTRA, Theophylline, or Zileuton

Step 4
Preferred: Medium-dose ICS + LABA
Alternative: Medium-dose ICS + LABA + oral corticosteroid
Consider Omalizumab for patients who have allergies

Step 5
Preferred: High-dose ICS + LABA + oral corticosteroid
AND
Consider Omalizumab for patients who have allergies

Step 6
Preferred: High-dose ICS + LABA + oral corticosteroid
AND
Consider Omalizumab for patients who have allergies

Each step: Patient education, environmental control, and management of comorbidities.
Steps 2-4: Consider subcutaneous allergen immunotherapy for patients who have allergic asthma

Quick-Relief Medication for All Patients
- SABA as needed for symptoms. Intensity of treatment depends on severity of symptoms: up to 3 treatments at 20-minute intervals as needed. Short course of oral systemic corticosteroids may be needed
- Caution: Increasing use of SABA or use > 2 days a week for symptom relief (not prevention of EIB) generally indicates inadequate control and the need to step up treatment.

Assess control
Step up if needed (first, check adherence, environmental control, and comorbid conditions)
Step down if possible (and asthma is well controlled at least 3 months)