

A CRITICAL LIFE SKILL:

ASTHMA MANAGEMENT

Asthma is a challenge to breathing that begins with chronic inflammation of the main air passages of the lungs – the bronchial tubes – and comes to a crisis when the muscles of the bronchial tubes are triggered to tighten. Often at this moment extra mucus is produced, resulting in airways so narrow that it feels like breathing through a drinking straw.

Nearly 20 million Americans suffer from asthma, many of them children.

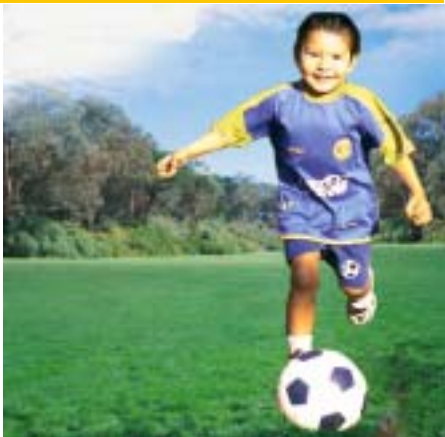
Asthma is the leading chronic disease that affects children in the United States, causing kids to miss about 14 million school days each year. By providing parents and caregivers with information on effective asthma management practices, there's hope to increase the number of children who have their asthma under control and reduce asthma-related visits to the hospital. May is National Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month, and the best time to learn how to handle your asthma.

Asthma is related to allergies, because the chronic inflammation of the airways that lays the foundation for an asthma episode is often due to allergy triggers.

Every person has his or her own triggers. If you avoid the factors that trigger your symptoms, you can minimize the severity of asthma symptoms and enjoy less interference with sleep, exercise, school, and work.

The better informed you are about your asthma triggers and management, the less asthma symptoms will interfere with your activities. Some asthma triggers are: respiratory infections, cold dry air, psychological stress, airborne plant pollen, mold, animal dander, dust mites, or exercise.

Asthma symptoms are often worse in the morning and late at night. In



between asthmatic episodes, symptoms have been known to disappear or improve but that does not mean the asthma has gone away.

It may surprise you to know that two out of three people diagnosed with asthma have never been given a written Asthma Action Plan – the basis for monitoring and managing asthma. The result of uncontrolled asthma could range from a frequent tendency for cough to minor wheezing to severe difficulty in breathing. In some cases, breathing is so labored that an asthma episode becomes life-threatening. Though asthma has no complete cure, it's important for kids with asthma and their families to learn asthma management so as to prevent asthma episodes and eliminate the fear that comes with uncontrolled asthma.

Asthma can be controlled. You can do it! When you know how to control asthma, it no longer controls you. If you or someone in your family has asthma, you will want to see an asthma specialist. It is important to avoid your triggers, work with your physician on a management plan and take appropriate medications as prescribed. Together, you and physician can work to ensure that your asthma is well managed. Having asthma should not stop you from participating in normal activities.

“Control Your Asthma and Score” is a message from American Lung Association to student athletes who have asthma and their coaches. Together with parents, coaches and athletes learn to better recognize early symptoms of exercise-induced asthma. The goal is to prevent uncontrolled asthma from putting a stop to any child's participation in games and completion.

You can still exercise when you have asthma, but you may need to take rest breaks while you exercise. If you know that exercise triggers your asthma, your health care provider may tell you to take your asthma medicine before you exercise. This way, you can still have fun exercising without having an asthma attack.

The Lung Association's National City Asthma Project identifies children with asthma and aims to equip them and their family with an Asthma Action Plan and the knowledge to follow it.

The National City Asthma Project brings a comprehensive approach to Asthma Management by combining clinical asthma care, community asthma awareness and education, and public involvement. Families impacted by asthma can receive up to six home visits, where the asthma educator identifies potential asthma triggers and introduces lung-friendly solutions. Practical assistance may include asthma peak flow meters, spacers, and – for a limited time – free albuterol inhalers. There is no charge to the recipient for these services, which are provided by referral from the Project's partner medical clinics:

- La Maestra
- Operation Samahan
- National City Family Clinic

The National City Asthma Project is funded in large part by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Public Health Service, Office of Minority Health.

For more information, please call:
1-800-Lung-USA (1-800-586-4872)

 **AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION**

or visit www.CaliforniaLung.org.



Manage Your Asthma and Score! Use the “rule of two:”

- Do you use a quick-relief inhaler more than TWO times per week?
- Do you wake up at night with with asthma more than TWO times per month?
- Do you refill your quick-relief inhaler more than TWO times per year?
- If you can answer YES to any of these questions, ask your doctor about “CONTROLLER MEDICINES”

Learn more about
managing Asthma!

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National City Asthma Project II

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