



Jasper School District Wellness Newsletter March 2018

ASTHMA!

Asthma, a lung disease, affects over 24 million people living in the United States, including more than 6 million children. It causes 3 in 5 people living with asthma to limit their physical activity or miss days at school and work. Asthma is also expensive, costing the nation \$56 billion each year.

What Is Asthma?

Asthma is a lung disease, which is one of the most common diseases in children, but affects adults as well. Asthma causes wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, and coughing at night or early in the morning. If you have asthma, you have it all the time, but you will have asthma attacks only when something bothers your lungs. In most cases, there is no known cause and no known cure. It does tend to run in families, or be inherited.

How Can You Tell if You Have Asthma?

It can be hard to tell if someone has asthma, especially in children under age 5. Having a doctor check how well your lungs work and check for allergies can help you find out if you have asthma.

During a checkup, the doctor will ask if you cough a lot, especially at night. He or she will then ask whether your breathing problems are worse after physical activity or at certain times of year. The doctor will then also ask about chest tightness, wheezing, and colds lasting more than 10 days. He or she will ask whether anyone in your family has or has had asthma, allergies, or other breathing problems.

Finally, the doctor will ask questions about your home and if you have missed school or work or have trouble doing certain things.

The doctor will also do a breathing test, called spirometry, to find out how well your lungs are working. The doctor will use a computer with a mouthpiece to test how much air you can breathe out after taking a very deep breath. The spirometer can measure airflow before and after you use asthma medicine.

What Is an Asthma Attack?

An asthma attack may include coughing, chest tightness, wheezing, and trouble breathing. The attack happens in your body's airways, which are the paths that carry air to your lungs. As the air moves through your lungs, the airways become smaller, like the branches of a tree are smaller than the tree trunk. During an asthma attack, the sides of the airways in your lungs swell and the airways shrink. Less air gets in and out of your lungs, and mucous that your body makes clogs up the airways even more. Asthma is very serious and can lead to hospitalization and even death.

What Causes an Asthma Attack?

An asthma attack can happen when you are exposed "asthma triggers." Try to identify triggers and avoid them. Some of the most common triggers are tobacco smoke, dust mites, outdoor air pollution, cockroach allergen, pets, mold, and smoke from burning wood or grass.

How Is Asthma Treated?

Taking medication as prescribed and avoiding triggers is essential when trying to treat asthma. Medication vary for the treatment of asthma, not everyone takes the same meds.

Asthma medicines come in two types—quick-relief and long-term control. Quick-relief medicines control the symptoms of an asthma attack. If you need to use your quick-relief medicines more and more, visit your doctor to see if you need a different medicine. Long-term control medicines help you have fewer and milder attacks, but they don't help you while you are having an asthma attack.

Remember – *you can control your asthma*. With your healthcare provider's help, make your own asthma action plan. Decide who should have a copy of your plan and where he or she should keep it. Take your long-term control medicine even when you don't have symptoms.

For more info: visit <https://acaai.org/asthma> or <http://www.aafa.org/page/asthma.aspx> or <https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/default.htm>