

LEARNING ABOUT ASTHMA

DISEASE MANAGEMENT BROCHURE

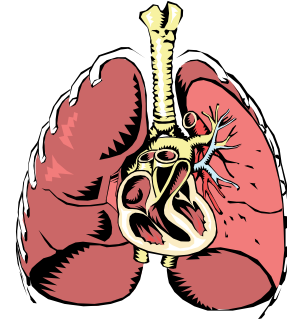
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ACCESS NURSING SERVICES

What is Asthma ?



Asthma is a respiratory disease that affects the airways of the lungs. These airways carry air in and out of the lung. When they become inflamed or irritated, the airways narrow-or become blocked-which makes it very difficult to breathe.



What are the symptoms of Asthma?

The symptoms of asthma are :

- ◆ Shortness of breath
- ◆ Coughing, Mucus may or may not be present
- ◆ Wheezing or noisy breathing– like a whistling sound
- ◆ Chest tightness and/or pain
- ◆ Feelings of air being trapped

What is an asthma attack?

During an attack, the amount of air going in and out of the lungs is reduced. This produces a lot of mucus that clogs the lungs and makes breathing harder causing an asthma attack. Asthma attacks can be mild or severe.

What causes an asthma attack?

Allergic-type asthma

- Indoor triggers: house dust, dust mites feathers, molds, pets, rodents, and other animals
- Outdoor triggers: molds, pollens, grasses, and flowers
- Foods: milk, soy, eggs, additives and preservatives placed in the foods

Non-Allergic-type asthma

- Infections caused by a virus
- Weather changes, cold air, exercise
- Pollutants: household cleaners, household chemicals, and cigarette smoke, ozon, carbon monoxide

Mixed-type asthma

- People with mixed-type asthma have symptoms from a combination of allergic and non-allergic asthma factors.
- Most people fall into this category! They have a little of both types of asthma.

Famous People with Asthma

- Antonio Vivaldi, composer, conductor
- Charles Dickens, author
- Dennis Rodman, basketball player
- Elizabeth Taylor, actress
- Jackie Joyner-Kersey, Olympic medalist-track
- John F. Kennedy, 35th President of United States
- Theodore Roosevelt, 26th President of the U.S.
- Tom Dolan, Olympic medalist-swimming
- Sharon Stone, actress

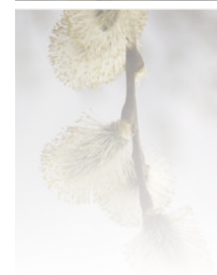
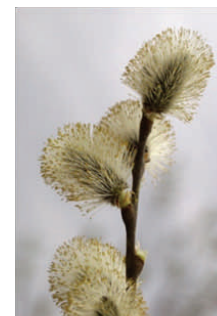
Asthma and Children

- Asthma is the most common chronic childhood disease
- 50% of people with asthma are under age 10.
- any child who has non-stop coughing or lots of respiratory infections like pneumonia or bronchitis should be checked for asthma.
- 75 to 80% of children also have allergies along with asthma
- Infants (under age 1) who have asthma may sound “rattle-y” when coughing and may have many “chest colds”.
- Obvious wheezing may not be noticed until after age 2.
- When on proper medication to control their asthma, children should exercise and play sports—just like kids without asthma.
- Studies have shown that children with moderate to severe asthma will usually have it as adults, too.



Asthma and Adult

- About 7% of adults in America have asthma— but most have *mild* asthma.
- In women, pregnancy can sometimes cause asthma. If a woman already has asthma, pregnancy can cause it to worsen.
- About 1/3 of women with asthma will have worse symptoms at some point during pregnancy
- If asthma is uncontrolled during pregnancy, it can result in premature births and lower birth weight of the baby due to the lack of oxygen during the pregnancy.
- Asthma that begins in adult years is often stubborn and doesn't respond to the usual medication.



Asthma and Elderly

- Many people develop asthma at retirement age! Almost 1.6 million people over the age of 65 have asthma.
- Asthma can be harder to diagnose and treat in this age group.
- Doctor's have found that older people are more likely to have side effects from asthma medicines. Recent studies show that older adults who take high doses of inhaled steroid medicines for a long time may increase their chance of getting glaucoma.
- Regular exercise is very important in managing asthma in the elderly. When people breathe deeply during exercise, it helps exercise the lungs—keeping them in good shape.





How can I control asthma?

Medicine for asthma comes in two forms: quick relief medicines control your asthma symptoms. Long-term medicine reduces the amount of attacks you have. Asthma medicine can be taken by using:

- a nebulizer,
- a dry powder inhaler (DPI),
- a metered-dose inhaler (MDI),
- a pill or liquid by mouth.

A **nebulizer** is a machine that produces asthma medicine as

mist. It is used mostly by very young children, clients with severe asthma, and those who have problems with regular inhalers. A DPI is the most common, quickest and easiest way to take asthma medicine. The MDI is a small can that contains medicine you inhale. Asthma medicines can have side effects.

Ask your doctor what are the side effects of your medicine.

To help control your asthma you should also have a peak flow meter. A **Peak Flow Meter** is a small plastic tool that measures how well an asthmatic is breathing. It can tell a person when an asthma attack is coming—even before symptoms are felt.



Asthma Can Be Controlled



- Clearing the air
- Reducing exposure to house dust mites
- Use bedding encasements
- Wash bed linens weekly
- Avoid down fillings
- Reduce humidity level
- Reducing exposure to environmental tobacco smoke
- Remove as many water and food sources as possible to avoid cockroaches
- People allergic to pets should not have them in the house
- At a minimum, do not allow pets in the bedroom
- Eliminating mold may help control asthma exacerbations



According to the American Lung Association, most cases of fetal asthma appear to be related to under-medication, that is not taking enough medication. Many times, when people feel good, they think they don't need their medicines so they skip some doses. This can cause serious problems

Rules to Remember...

- ◆ **A**void triggers that might aggravate asthma in your clients.
- ◆ **S**tay indoors during very cold weather, high winds, and high pollen counts.
- ◆ **T**ake precautions to prevent attacks.
- ◆ **H**elp remind your clients to carry their medications with them at all times!
- ◆ **M**anage asthma by following doctor's orders.
- ◆ **A**ct quickly if you witness an asthma attack. Call for help!

Tips for Helping Clients with Asthma

MEDICATION

- Watch how your clients use their medications, especially inhalers. Let your coordinator know if you think they may be using them wrong.
- Encourage your clients to carry their asthma medications at all times-just in case they need them.
- Remind your clients to always take their asthma medication as prescribed by their doctor-no more and no less-even if they feel fine!
- Watch your clients for early symptoms and respond quickly. This may help prevent a serious asthma attack.



- Help your clients keep track of their symptoms: how many of them, how bad they are, and when they occur. It is helpful if your clients can learn to tell when they are having an attack.
- Remind your client not to share their asthma medications with anyone.
- Watch your client for asthma symptoms when they are exercising. They may need to take extra medication. Ask your coordinator.

OXYGEN SAFETY

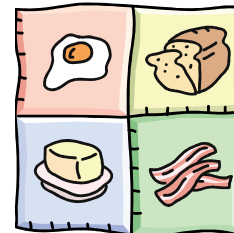
- It is very important **not** to smoke near oxygen. Encourage your clients their family members not to smoke at all.

- If your client is using oxygen, make sure the equipment is being used correctly. Call your coordinator if the client seems to need help.



NUTRITION

- Eating well-balanced meals is very important. Encourage your asthmatic clients to eat properly.
- Staying hydrated is important, too. Encourage your clients to drink plenty of fluids even in the winter.



Activity/Energy Conservation

- Encourage your clients to improve their sleep habits.
- Help your clients do the most important chores or activities *first*-when they have the most energy.
- Try not to let your clients with asthma do too much in one day.

Before heading outside, try calling for a pollen count.
 1-877-9ACHOOO (1-877-922-4666) or 1-800-9-POLLEN (1-800-976-5536)

Weather Related

- Encourage your clients to take precautions such as wearing a scarf over the mouth and nose to warm the air before breathing in.
- Encourage your clients to dress in layers. This will help maintain body heat.

General Safety

- Remain calm if you witness an asthma attack. Encourage your client to breathe and to take any prescribed asthma medication. Call for help!
- Help your clients control the triggers that irritate their asthma by encourage them to **avoid** those triggers.
- If you dust and vacuum your client's living area, try to do so when the client is in another room.
- Avoid wearing strong perfumes or using strong-smelling cleaning fluids around clients with asthma.
- Encourage them to keep their windows closed during allergy season and to use the air-conditioning instead.



POST TEST

Please circle the best choice and then check your answers with educator. **You can submit this paper to your coordinator or send by mail to office.**

- 1. The following are common symptoms of Asthma except for:
 - A. Coughing
 - B. Sore throat and fever
 - C. Chest tightness and/or pain
 - D. Wheezing or noisy breathing
- 2. Mrs. An is using her inhaler correctly when:
 - A. She holds it level with her nose
 - B. She holds it 10 inches away from her mouth
 - C. She holds it 1-2 inches in front of her mouth
 - D. She breathes all the way in before pressing the inhaler
- 3. A person may have Asthma if you can hear him wheezing:
 - A. During cold weather
 - B. When he's around flower arrangements
 - C. When he walks into a newly painted room
 - D. All of the above
- 4. Primary prevention of adult onset Asthma includes:
 - A. Regular exercise
 - B. Smoking cessation
 - C. Good sleeping habits
 - D. All of the above

- 5. HHA role in caring for a client with asthma includes:
 - A. Encourage your patient to drink fluids in the winter only
 - B. Don't let your patient take the medication if they feel fine
 - C. Monitor and identify early symptoms and report immediately
 - D. Wearing strong perfumes or using strong-smelling cleaning fluids
- 6. True or False
As long as Asthma patients follow their treatment plan, they don't need regular doctor's appointments.
- 7. True or False
Asthma is a chronic lung disease that is characterized by inflammation or swelling of the airway and causes breathing problems
- 8. True or False
Children with moderate to severe asthma will usually have it as adults, too.
- 9. True or False
The most common cause of an Asthma attack fall under the allergic-type category (e.g. dust, molds, pets, pollens, milk, eggs)
- 10. True or False
A peak flow is the device that measures how well an asthmatic is breathing tells you when an asthma attack is coming even before symptoms are felt.

INSERVICE CREDIT: 1 HOUR	SCORE: _____
EMPLOYEE NAME: _____	TITLE: _____
EDUCATOR SIGNATURE: _____	DATE: _____