

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

Can Kids With Asthma Play Sports?

You probably know that asthma can cause breathing problems. So, can kids with asthma play sports? You bet they can! Being active and playing sports is a good idea if you have asthma. Why? Because it can help your lungs get stronger, so they work better. Some athletes with asthma have done more than develop stronger lungs. They've played professional football and basketball and they've even won medals at the Olympic Games!

Some sports are less likely to bother a person's asthma. Swimming, baseball, football and gymnastics are sports that are less likely to trigger flare-ups. In some sports, you need to keep going for a long time. These sports may be harder for people with asthma. They include cycling, long-distance running, soccer, basketball, cross-country skiing and ice hockey. This doesn't mean you can't play these sports if you really like them. In fact, many athletes with asthma have found that with the right training and medicine, they can do any sport they choose.

Before playing sports, it is important that your asthma is under control.

That means you aren't having lots of symptoms or flare-ups. To make this happen, it's very important that you take all asthma medicine just like your doctor tells you to, even when you are feeling okay.

Your doctor will also tell you some other things you can do to avoid flare-ups. This may mean skipping outdoor workouts when there is lots of pollen in the air, wearing a scarf or ski mask when you play outside during the winter or making sure you always have time for a careful warm up and cool down.

Make sure your coach and teammates know about your asthma. That way, they will understand if you need to stop working out because of breathing trouble. It's also helpful if your coach knows what steps to take if you have a flare-up. Listen to your body and follow the instructions your doctor gave you for handling breathing problems. And if you keep your asthma in good control, you'll be in the game and not on the sidelines!

What Happens During an Asthma Flare-Up?

During a flare-up, you might have:

- trouble breathing (some people say it's like trying to breathe through a straw)
- a tight or painful feeling in the chest
- a whistling sound when he or she breathes (wheezing)
- a cough

Flare-ups also can cause sweating or make you feel like your heart is beating faster than normal, even though you are sitting still.

Indoor Trigger Check List

There are plenty of triggers hiding inside your home that can make you and your family miserable. Sometimes it's clear what is causing you to sneeze and wheeze, while other times it takes some detective work. Below are some things that can trigger asthma attacks; you may be allergic to one or more of them.

- Dust Mites
- Mold
- Secondhand Smoke
- Cockroaches
- Pets
- Pesticides
- Mothballs
- Air Fresheners
- Potpourri
- Herbs
- Cleaning Products
- Garden Chemicals
- Carpet and Carpet Padding
- Cosmetics
- Deodorant
- Air Sprays
- Soap
- Hair Products
- Fabric Softener
- Detergent
- Paint
- Glue
- Fireplaces
- Wood Burning Stoves
- Gasoline
- Petroleum Vapors



<http://www.aanma.org>

What Does Asthma Feel Like?

Has one of your friends ever asked you what it feels like to have asthma?

Well here's a way to show them what it's like when you can't breathe. All you need is a straw.

Here's what you do:

- Have your friend run in place really fast for one minute.
- If you don't have a clock or a timer, just have them do 50 jumping jacks or jump rope 100 times instead.
- When they're finished, they should be breathing hard and fast.
- Tell them to stop. Then put a straw in their mouth.
- Tell them to close their lips around the straw, plug their nose, and try to breathe through the straw.

They'll see how hard it is to get air into their lungs through the straw. They'll feel like they're having an asthma attack and can't breathe. Then, they'll understand what you feel like when you have asthma!

<http://www.aanma.org>

Get Rid of Whom?



Are You Allergic to Your Pet?

In some cases, the symptoms created by being around pets can be controlled with medications and pet-proofing your home. Other times, your pet may just not be a good match for healthy living. Being around animals you may be allergic to for long periods can cause changes to your immune system. These changes can threaten your health and well being. In this case, finding a new home for the pet is the best advice.

Bedroom Bliss

Don't allow pets in the bedroom. Stick to this rule and you may find your symptoms improve quickly! No hamsters, birds, dogs, cats, snakes, turtles or any critter where dander, urine/fecal pellets, saliva, feather dust, cedar chips, mold, or stinky stuff is part of the package.

Be a Clean Freak

Get rid of the clutter and clean to minimize dust, dander, saliva residue, urine proteins and mold! Wash bedding in hot water once a week. Put a washable throw or sheet on couches and chairs and wash them once a week in hot water. Steam clean carpets often and use products that neutralize pet allergens.

Wash your pet weekly (for cats, this can be torture for both owner and pet, so consider the pet's emotional health, please) and keep your pet's cage, crate and feeding area clean.

<http://www.aanma.org>



Asthma Myth

Myth: Everybody's asthma is the same.

The Facts:

This is not true. The seriousness with which asthma affects people can be very different from one person to another. Treatment for one person may not be the same as for another. Talk with your doctor or look at your Asthma Action Plan, and never share asthma medications with someone else.

<http://kids.sutterhealth.org>



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For information about **Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County** visit our website: www.StepsFL.com or call **2-1-1** (Pinellas County cell phone users must call 727-210-4211)