

PARENT HEALTH BULLETIN



Pinellas County Health Department

Steps to a HealthierFL—Pinellas County

Asthma Facts

Who Gets Asthma?

Asthma is more common than you might think. Over 6 million kids in the United States have asthma. Asthma affects about one or two children out of 10. That means if you have 20 kids in your class, two to four of them might have asthma. Asthma can start at any age, but it is most common in school-age children.

No one really knows why one person's airways are more sensitive than another person's, but we do know that asthma runs in families. That means if a child has asthma, he or she may also have a parent, sibling, uncle, or other relative who has asthma or had asthma.

Asthma flare-ups may sound a little like a cold, with coughing and wheezing, but asthma isn't contagious. You can't catch it from someone like you can catch a cold.

www.kidshealth.org



Why Does My Asthma Act Up at Night?

For reasons we don't fully understand, uncontrolled asthma often acts up at night. It probably has to do with natural body rhythms and changes in your body's hormones, as well as the fact some symptoms appear hours after you come in contact with a trigger. The important thing to know about nighttime asthma is you should be able to sleep through the night.

www.kidshealth.org

How Is Asthma Treated?

Your doctor can work with you to decide about your treatment goals and what you need to do to control your asthma to achieve these goals. Asthma treatment includes:

- Working closely with your doctor to decide treatment goals.
- Avoiding things that bring on asthma symptoms or make symptoms worse. This can reduce the amount of medicine needed to control your asthma.
- Using asthma medicines. Allergy medicine and shots may also help control asthma in some people.
- Monitoring your asthma to recognize when symptoms are getting worse and act quickly to prevent or stop an asthma attack.

With proper treatment:

- Your asthma should be controlled.
- You should be free of asthma symptoms.
- You should have fewer attacks.
- You should need to use quick-relief medicines less often.
- You should be able to do normal activities without having symptoms.

Your doctor will work with you to develop an asthma self-management plan for controlling your asthma on a daily basis and an emergency action plan for stopping asthma attacks. These plans will tell you what medicines to take and other things you should do to keep asthma under control.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

22 million people, including 6.5 million children, have asthma.



Asthma is the most common serious chronic disease of childhood.

The Myths of Asthma



Myth: You only have asthma when you have trouble breathing.

Fact: Asthma is a disease that can be very serious, and hard to predict. Even without visible symptoms, there is underlying inflammation in the airways in people with asthma. Asthma does not go away when the symptoms are gone. It is important to keep your asthma in control by following your doctor's asthma plan and avoiding asthma triggers.

Myth: If your child has asthma, they should not play sports or be active.

Fact: Sports and other forms of activity are just as important for someone with asthma as they are for someone without asthma. It is important to control a child's asthma by following the guidelines set by their doctor. They should also have a current asthma action plan from their doctor to help prevent asthma attacks.

Myth: Children often outgrow their asthma.

Fact: Asthma is a life-long disease. A child's asthma can seem to go away or become less serious over time. When children's lungs grow, the airways expand. This sometimes causes asthma symptoms to decrease, but symptoms can return without warning.

Myth: Asthma symptoms are the same for everyone.

Fact: Asthma can affect each person differently. One person may show several symptoms, such as wheezing, chest tightness, and fatigue, while someone else may only cough. You should know what your child's symptoms are so you can get help quickly.



www.health.utah.gov/asthma

7th Annual Asthma Family Day

Free Event

Saturday May 10th, 2008

8:30am-12:30 pm

University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

If you would like to register, need additional information or want to be added to our mailing list, please email maddena@allkids.org or call **727-767-4188** or **800-456-4543, ext. 4188**.



For information about Steps to a HealthierFL-Pinellas County visit our website: www.StepsFL.com or call 727-820-4113

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