

Asthma Control Test



By doing so, you are contributing to regional environmental research.

The test asks five questions. Questions include how much time your asthma keeps you from work, from school, or at home; how often you have shortness of breath; how often your asthma symptoms wake you at night or early morning; how often you use your rescue inhaler; and how you would rate your asthma control over the past four weeks. Each question has five choices ranging from "not at all" to "more than once a day."

To learn more about the test, or to take it, go to www.asthmacontrol.com.

Source: American Lung Association
"The Breathe Easy @/Asthma Digest"
June 2007
www.asthmacontrol.com

The American Lung Association supports the Asthma Control Test developed by Quality Metric Incorporated. They want everyone 12 years of age and older with asthma to take it, no matter how well controlled he or she thinks their asthma is.

The test allows patients to see and print their scores and print it out to take with them to their doctor's appointments. You will be asked to enter your zip code.

Asthma Disease Management Newsletter

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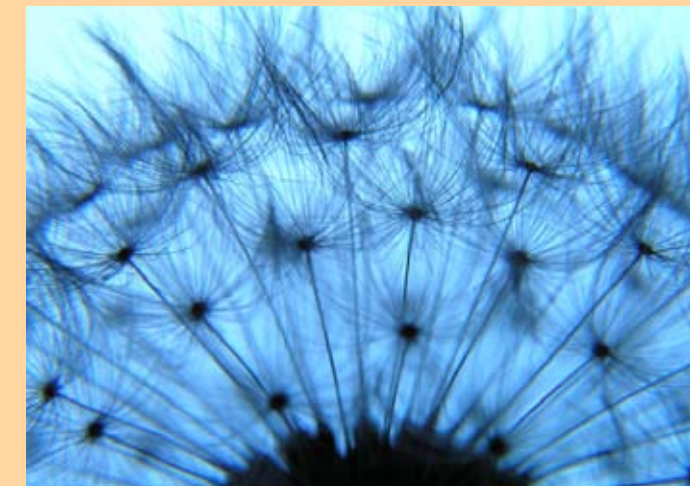
Addressing Asthma in Schools

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that in a classroom of 30 children about three are likely to have asthma. Schools are encouraged to help control asthma by becoming more "asthma friendly." This includes adopting policies and procedures, and coordinating student services, to better serve students with asthma. Students diagnosed with asthma should have a written asthma action plan on file and easily accessible at the school. Schools can provide asthma education and work with other organizations focusing on asthma. Parents, school administrators, teachers, aids, and the asthmatic

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What is Asthma?



Asthma is a disease of the lungs affecting more than 15 million Americans, over one-third of which are children. There is a lot you can do to manage this disease.

Asthma affects the airways in your lungs. With asthma, your airways and bronchial tubes are extra sensitive,

especially to "triggers" such as dust, animals, pollen, mold, cigarette smoke, cold air, viruses, exercise, and certain occupational exposures.

Asthma hampers your lungs' ability to deliver oxygen to your blood. Without a steady supply of oxygen, your body's organs can't function properly and your overall health can be threatened.

Education and proper medical care will allow most people to control their asthma and lead relatively unrestricted, productive lives.

With proper treatment and self-management, asthma can be controlled. You play an active role in managing your asthma through taking medications as prescribed by your doctor and avoiding triggers.

Source: *Managing Your Asthma: A Patient's Guide*. Published by the Department of Defense in partnership with Veteran's Affairs.

Health Information Audio Library
Available 24 hours a day,
7 days a week at: 877-217-7946

Health and Wellness web site:
www.humana-military.com





Using an Inhaler

Inhaled medication has to get into your lungs to work. Your health care provider can show you the steps to follow and watch you use your inhaler to ensure you are using it correctly. These are the steps you should follow:

1. Remove the cap and shake the inhaler.
2. Breathe out.
3. Hold the inhaler as instructed.
4. Breathe in slowly through your mouth as you press down on the inhaler.
5. Keep breathing in slowly and deeply.
6. Hold your breath for 10 seconds. Breathe out.
7. Repeat as instructed.

If you are having trouble using your inhaler the right way, your health care provider may give you a spacer or holding chamber to make it easier for you to take your medication. A spacer attaches to your inhaler. It helps direct the medication into your lungs. When using a spacer, follow these steps:

1. Attach the spacer to your inhaler.
2. Shake well.
3. Press the inhaler button to release a puff of medicine into the spacer.
4. Breathe out, then breathe in slowly and deeply on the mouthpiece.
5. Hold your breath for 10 seconds. Breathe out.
6. Repeat as instructed.

Source: *Managing Your Asthma: A Patient's Guide*. Published by the Department of Defense in partnership with Veteran's Affairs.

Role of the School Nurse

The role of the school nurse, according to the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), is to "promote student success through the advancement of school health services by professional registered school nurses." The school nurse plays an important role in coordinating care for the asthmatic child while at school. In this role, the nurse must work with the parents, school officials, and health-care providers to meet the educational needs of the child and control the child's asthma symptoms while at school.

The nurse plays a key role in the effective management of students with asthma. The nurse educates the student and family regarding asthma management, use of medications, and proper use of peak flow meters and

metered dose inhalers. The school nurse often delivers developmentally appropriate asthma self-management skill lessons. She may be involved in helping develop the written asthma action plan. The nurse is a source of asthma educational materials for the student and the parents. She educates the school board, school staff and community about asthma triggers in the school and community and works with them to control air quality.

Parents can help the school nurse by granting permission to health care providers to send their child's health care information to the nurse. By doing so, the nurse has the most current treatment plan and can best help the child.

Source: www.nasn.org

Addressing Asthma in Schools

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child all need to be involved to achieve the best results.

The CDC has identified six strategies for schools and districts to consider for addressing asthma in schools.

1. Establish management and support systems for asthma-friendly schools.
2. Provide appropriate school health and mental health services for students with asthma.
3. Provide asthma education and awareness programs for students and school staff.

4. Provide a safe and healthy school environment to reduce asthma triggers.
5. Provide safe, enjoyable physical education and activity opportunities for students with asthma.
6. Coordinate school, family, and community efforts to better manage asthma symptoms and reduce school absences among students with asthma.

Reference: www.CDC.gov/HealthyYouth/asthma/facts

Have You Had Your Flu Vaccination This Season?



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza activity has peaked in February during 43% of the flu seasons surveyed. The message is that January is not too late to get a flu shot. Vaccination as late as even February can prevent a lot of influenza. If you have not already received your flu shot this season, talk to your doctor about getting a flu vaccination today!

Influenza (flu) is the most frequent cause of death from a vaccine-preventable disease in the United States. Although persons 65 years of age and older are at the highest risk of dying from the flu, other age groups can be at nearly as high a risk for flu-associated hospitalizations – depending upon their personal medical profiles.

Flu poses an even greater danger for people who have asthma or any type of respiratory condition. When you have asthma, the air passages in your lungs overreact to allergens and irritants – including the flu virus. Compounding the problem, flu viruses can replicate themselves more extensively in lungs affected by asthma.

Call your doctor if you think you have the flu. Your doctor may prescribe an antiviral medication to help shorten the duration and intensity of illness. To be effective, antiviral medication must be taken within 24 to 48 hours after symptoms first appear.

Allergies and Asthma



Allergy-induced asthma is the most common type of asthma in the United States. Sixty percent of all asthma is estimated to be the allergic type according to Mayo Clinic allergy specialist, James T. Li, M.D.

In order to determine if your asthma symptoms are made worse by allergies, your doctor will want to get a detailed history of your asthma triggers. It is important for you to be aware of the time of year and the place you were when you experienced shortness of air. You may have difficulty remembering past exposures and multiple locations. We recommend that you keep a log of the details when you have difficulty breathing.

Asthma is rarely triggered by food allergies. Indoor allergens (the substance that triggers your symptoms)

are much more likely to be the culprit. Dust mites, animal dander, and cockroaches are examples of indoor allergens. Pollen and mold are examples of outdoor allergens. Breathing in these substances triggers the inflammation and swelling of the airways, leading to asthma symptoms.

Allergy testing with either skin or radioallergosorbent testing (RAST) is recommended for adults with moderate to severe persistent asthma and children greater than three years of age with persistent asthma. If you or your child have not been tested for allergies and you are frequently visiting an urgent care or emergency department for your symptoms, ask your doctor if allergy testing is right for you.

References:
Mayoclinic.com/health/allergies-and-asthma
VHA/DoD Clinical Practice Guideline "Management of Asthma"