

Symptoms & Triggers of Childhood Asthma

“Asthma doesn’t make any children different because any child can do anything even if they have asthma.”

Kendyll Kloskowski is just like any other 8-year-old. She loves to read books and play outside. Four years ago, she was diagnosed with asthma. But that hasn’t stopped her from enjoying a full and active life.

“I can do all the things I want to do.”

Asthma is a disease that makes it hard for air to move through your lungs. It makes it hard for you to breathe. If you have asthma, you’re not alone.

“Asthma is pretty common in kids. We think it’s in somewhere a little less than one in ten kids. So that’s about three kids per every school classroom if you think about it.”

With asthma, you need to pay close attention to your body to understand when you might be having an asthma flare-up.

Some signs or symptoms of asthma are trouble catching your breath, coughing, tightness in your chest, wheezing or fast breathing.

“It’s scary and you can barely breathe. You’re taking little breaths and it will sort of hurt you.”

It’s important for you to tell your parents if you feel any of these warning signs. Because asthma can be hard to diagnose in children, you need to talk about what the symptoms feel like.

Dr. Nicholas Antos specializes in treating kids with asthma. His own daughter has asthma.

“Even for me it was hard to tell, even with what I do, whether the symptoms were asthma or if it was from something else.”

“It’s also harder as parents and as doctors because kids get all sorts of colds. They get colds all the time.”

“It’s hard to discern what’s more of a normal cough and what’s more of an asthmatic cough.”

Asthma attacks are caused by things called triggers. And they’re everywhere.

- Pollen in the air
- Chemicals
- Changes in the weather
- Smoke
- Dust
- Stress
- Exercise, and even
- Feeling excited, mad or sad can all irritate your asthma

“Asthma is kind of a tough disease because it is very individualized. Every patient’s asthma is triggered by something different.”

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For Kendyll, if she gets sick, it triggers her asthma – so keeping germs out of her house is very important. Just ask her mom...

“Any sort of cough or cold that comes in to the family, she gets it faster and it lasts longer and that seems to be her number one trigger...”

...Wash hands. Always keep things clean. Get on the other kids to wash hands. That’s the biggest.”

There are other asthma triggers found in homes that you might not have thought about...

“Irritants in the home that are really, really common are air fresheners, candles, perfumes. People love perfumes. When I go into a home, the thing that I do first is I smell.”

Kids with asthma should also keep moving. Exercise actually helps...

“Exercising is very good for your lungs. We don’t encourage people to pull kids out of sports or things like that. It’s very good for kids to do.”

Asthma isn’t keeping Kendyll down and it shouldn’t stop you, either. All it takes is listening to your doctor and staying away from things that trigger your asthma.

“We’ve always told her she can do anything she puts her mind to, and we’ve proved that by participating in activities and showing her absolutely she can do it.”