

# Triggers

After Dr. Yan examined him and went through a special asthma questionnaire, it looks like Big does have asthma.

A “questionnaire” is just a bunch of questions about something.

OK, we know now Big has asthma, but what caused it?

Doctors don’t know exactly why some people have asthma, but they do know some things that bring it on or make it worse. Big and Jiggs are learning about that right now.

Oh, there you are. Oh, my poor baby! Are you okay?

Oh ma! I’m not a baby. I’m a big bad wolf.

He has asthma.

Oh my! What is asthma?

It’s shortness of breath, coughing, wheezing, a tight feeling in my chest - a whole bunch of stuff.

Mmm! A doctor’s office that caters. Yum! C’mere little piggie.

Hey, leave him alone. He’s the one who brought me here to help me.

Sir! Sir! Excuse me. You can’t smoke in here.

Jeez! You can’t smoke anywhere anymore.

Exposure to smoking is very bad for asthma.

Oh sure, now the pigs are the heroes and Dad is the bad guy.

No one is saying you’re the “bad guy.” But your son has asthma and a lot of things, especially someone smoking, can trigger an asthma attack.

Trigger?! Attack?! W...w...what do you mean?

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Well, a “trigger” is something that might cause an asthma attack. And an asthma “attack” or “flare” is what we call it when asthma symptoms get bad. Please sir, no smoking.

Hmm. Well, somebody woke up on the wrong side of the gurney this morning.

Oh, don’t you pay any attention to him. He used to be the Big Bad Wolf. But, you know, since he couldn’t huff and puff any more, well, he’s gets a little cranky.

I used to be the Big Bad Wolf too.

Don’t worry. You’ll be the Big Bad Wolf again. For sure. Especially if you stay away from these asthma triggers.

Smoke, and other air pollution...

Also things that cause allergy symptoms like dust, stuff on pet hair and skin called “dander” ...grass or weed pollen...

What’s pollen?

Well, “pollen” is tiny dust-like stuff from flowers and plants. Or you could also be allergic to some foods like wheat, cow’s milk, peanuts, or shellfish. A cold or the flu can also bring on an asthma attack. Sometimes, exercise or cold air can trigger an asthma attack.

Well that sounds like you. You haven’t been running for a long time because of your wheezing and your coughing. Maybe you have asthma, too. And if you took care of it, maybe you could start to run. Maybe even huff & puff again.

Uh...yeah, well you just take care of the kid and leave me alone. (Wheeze).

Big, Dr. Yan is probably going to prescribe two different kinds of medicine for you. One helps you out if your asthma flares up. It’s a “rescue” medicine. The other is for “maintenance”, to help keep you from having an attack even if you run into one of your triggers.

Rescue?

Maintenance?

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Don't worry. I'll explain it so everyone understands.

Two different medicines? Is it me or is this getting confusing?

It's a lot to learn and it takes time to understand it all. But, it's especially important to keep these different types of asthma medicines straight. That's why we're going to talk more about them in our next episode.