

Asthma and Your Child: What is it?

If your child has been diagnosed with asthma, there's a lot you can do to help your child live a healthy, active life.

You can begin by learning as much as you can about asthma.

Asthma affects the lungs and makes it harder for your child to breathe.

Asthma causes your child's airways to swell and become narrow. Mucus can build up. Then the air can't move in and out of your child's lungs very well, making it hard to breathe.

This is called a flare-up or an asthma attack.

Asthma attacks may happen every now and then or, in severe cases, every day.

With treatment, you and your child can learn to control symptoms and reduce the risk of asthma attacks.

Asthma is treated with medicine.

Long-term control medicines help prevent asthma attacks. They are usually taken daily, even if your child feels well.

Quick-relief medicines treat symptoms fast. They are taken as needed when symptoms flare-up.

Taking medicines is an important part of asthma treatment. Find ways to help your child remember, such as taping notes on the bathroom mirror.

Treatment also includes helping your child to avoid things that might trigger symptoms and to follow an asthma action plan.

A trigger is anything that can lead to an asthma attack or symptoms flare-up.

Trigger examples include dust, animals, mold, pollen, and things your child is allergic to.

Your child's doctor will also work with you to create an asthma action plan.

This is a written treatment plan that includes information about how to measure and record peak flow, and what to do during an asthma attack.

The plan will also help you and your child make quick decisions about medicine and treatment.

Tell your child's principal, school nurse, teachers, and coaches that your child has asthma.

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Give them a copy of your child's asthma action plan so they can help your child take their medicine and will know what to do during an asthma attack.

You can also help your child stay healthy by making sure they are up to date on all vaccines, including COVID-19 and flu vaccines.

Remember, you can help your child manage asthma by making sure your child takes asthma medicines the right way, follows their asthma action plan, and avoids things that can make asthma worse.

Asthma may last through your child's life, but it does not have to hold your child back.

Many children have asthma and lead a full and active life, including playing sports and enjoying normal activities.

Encourage your child to be active, play, and do what other kids do.

And be sure to tell your child's doctor about any concerns you or your child may have about asthma or treatment.

They are there to help.