

WHAT SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE STUDENT WITH ASTHMA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Most children have relatively mild asthma which can be controlled by medication. On occasion, certain factors may result in the child displaying symptoms such as wheezing, a dry hacking cough, or even severe breathing difficulty.

HOW ASTHMA AFFECTS THE LUNGS

The muscles around the bronchial tubes tighten, narrowing the airway. The inner lining of the bronchial tubes swells causing further narrowing of the air passages. Mucus is secreted into the bronchial tubes narrowing and plugging air passages.

COMMON ASTHMA TRIGGERS

Allergens such as pollen, animal dander, dust mites, and molds, and irritants such as cold air, strong odors, weather changes and cigarette smoke. Upper respiratory infections such as cold or flu, and physical exercise (especially in cold weather) may also act as triggers.

HELP THE CHILD HAVE A NORMAL EXPERIENCE

Treat the child with asthma like a normal child. Accept the child and understand his/her condition. Do not label the child as "sick". Do not isolate the child. His/her anxiety can be lessened if you show you understand and know how to be helpful.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ASTHMA

Speaking in choppy sentences
Coughing
Wheezing or a whistling sound
Tight chest
Breathing through mouth
Shortness of breath
Rapid breathing.

ACTIONS TO TAKE

Help the child to assume an upright position with shoulders relaxed.
Talk to the child reassuringly and calmly.
Help him/her to relax.
Encourage the child to take appropriate medication.
If the child feels like having something to drink, encourage drinking room-temperature fluids.
If the medications do not appear to be working effectively, notify the parent or guardian.

SIGNS OF AN ASTHMA EMERGENCY

Nose flaring
Tight neck muscles
Bluish nail beds or lips
Chest retraction (chest skin sucked in)
Failure of medication to reduce worsening symptoms

ACTIONS TO TAKE

CALL 911

ASTHMA ACTION PLAN for SCHOOL

Communication with the parent, physician, teachers and other school staff, and the district nurse is essential in developing a plan to ensure proper treatment of asthma symptoms at school. All medication forms and plans need to be updated annually and/or with changes in student's health. These forms are available on the Box Elder School District website or in the school office.