Asthma Basics for Schools

Developed by the National Asthma Education and Prevention Program (NAEPP)



Asthma Basics for Schools Presentation Overview

- The problem of asthma among school-age youth
- Causes, signs & symptoms
- Impact on learning
- Asthma triggers
- Control of Asthma
- How asthma-friendly is your school?
- How to handle an asthma episode

Asthma is a Major Health Problem in the U.S.

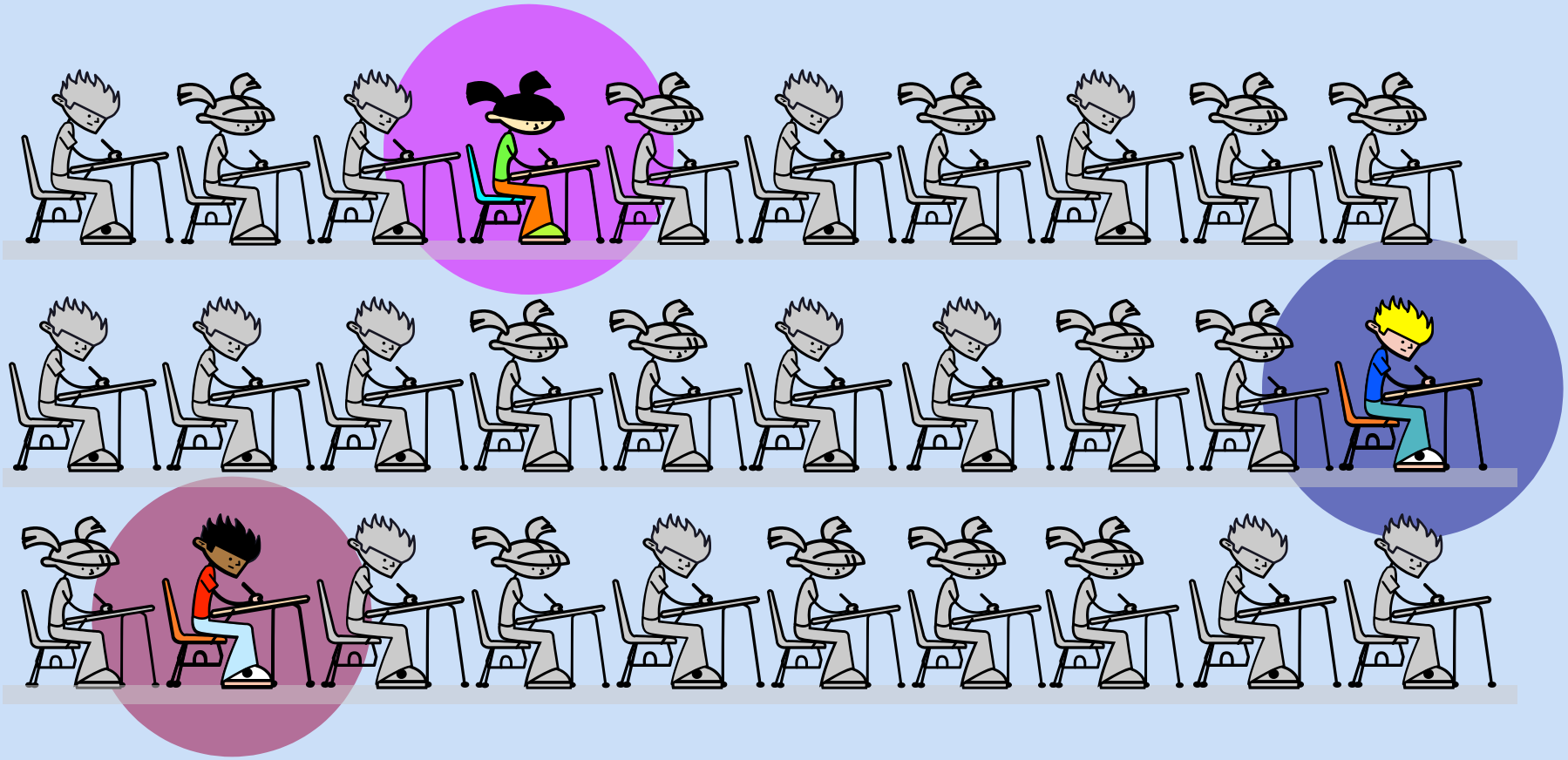
- 5 million school-aged children have asthma[1]
- Students miss almost 13 million school days each year due to asthma[2]
- Asthma is the 3rd-ranking cause of hospitalization among children under 15[3]

1 Epidemiology and Statistics Unit. Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality. NYC: ALA, July 2006.

2 CDC. Asthma Prevalence, Health Care Use and Mortality, 2003-2005. National Center for Health Statistics. Washington, DC.

3 Hall MJ & DeFrances CJ. 2001 National Hospital Discharge Survey. Advance data from Vital and Health Statistics, Table 3; no 332. Hyattsville, MD: NCHS,2003.

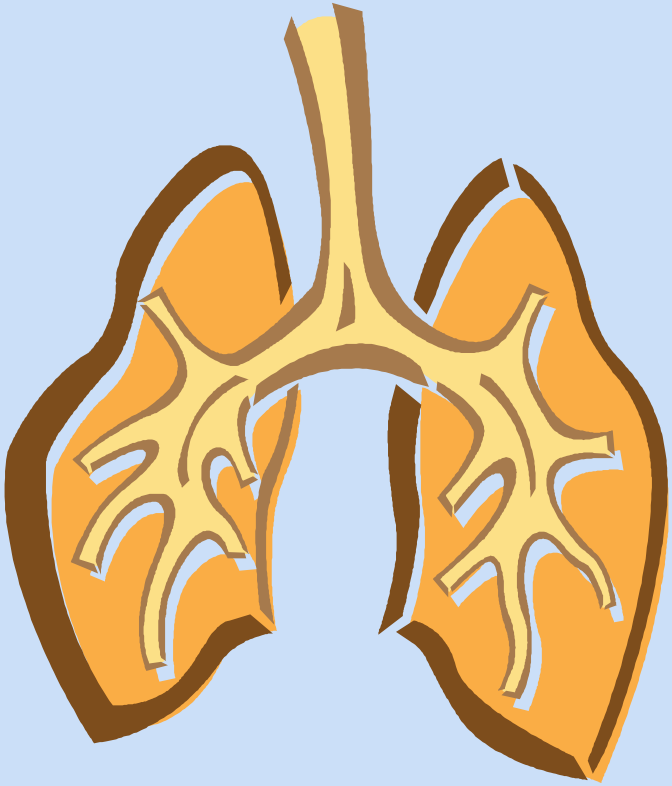
On average, 3 children in a classroom of 30



are likely to have asthma.[4]

4 Epidemiology and Statistics Unit. Trends in Asthma Morbidity and Mortality. NYC: ALA, July 2006.

What is Asthma?



A condition that:

- is chronic
- produces recurring episodes of breathing problems
- is potentially life-threatening
- can occur at any age
- is not contagious
- cannot be cured, but can be controlled

What are the Symptoms of Asthma?

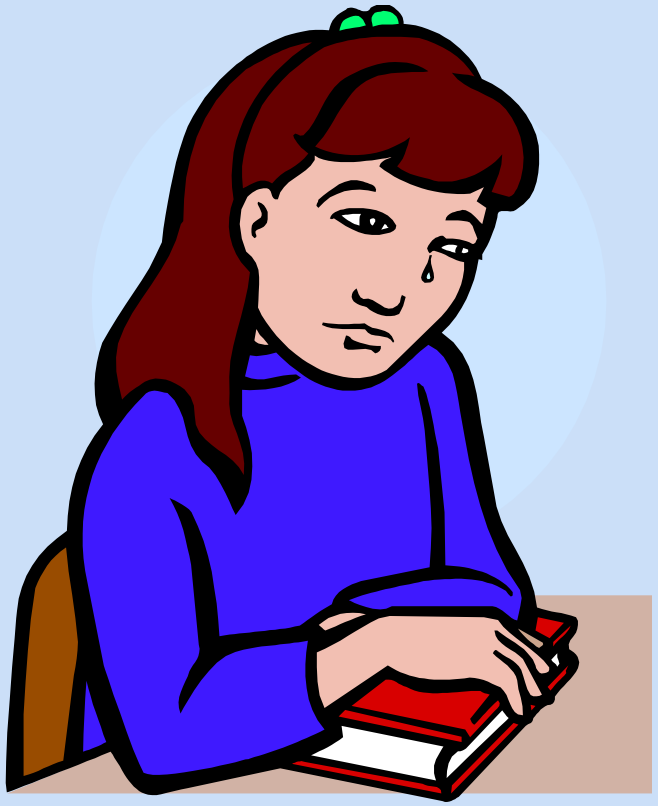


- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Tightness in the chest
- Coughing
- Waking at night with any of the above symptoms*

* a key marker of uncontrolled asthma

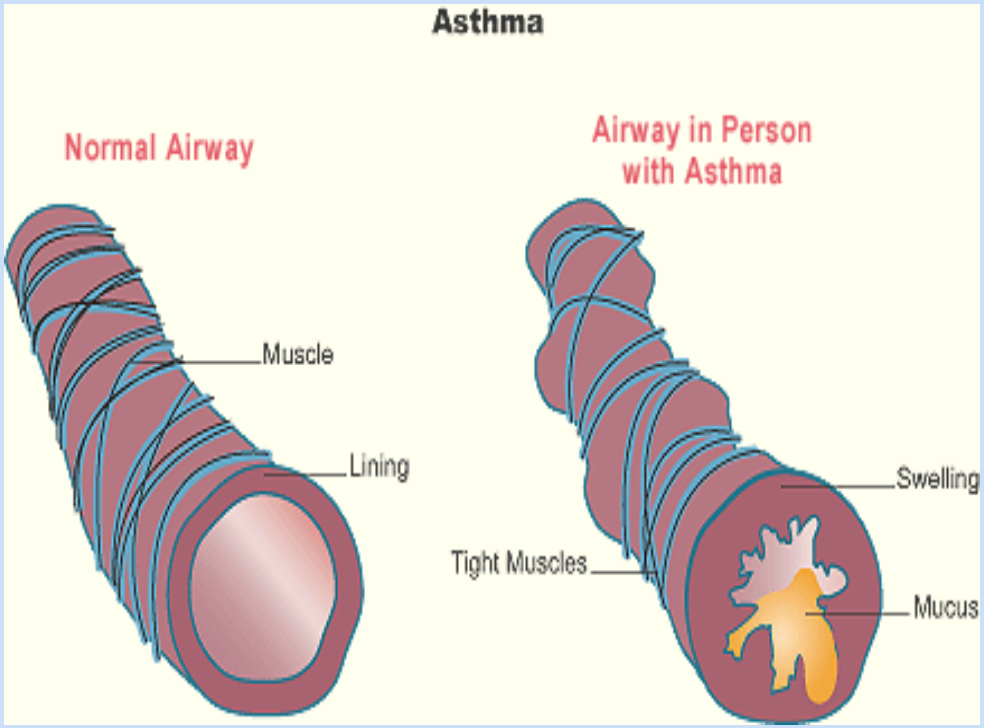
How Does Asthma that is not Well-Controlled Impact Student Learning?

- Fatigue – students up at night with coughing, wheezing and other symptoms are tired in the morning
- Absenteeism related to asthma episodes, health care appointments, and hospitalizations
- Missed class time due to frequent school health office visits



What Happens During an Episode of Asthma?

- The lining of the airways become narrow and easily irritated due to inflammation
- The airways produce a thick mucus
- The muscles around the airways tighten and make airways narrower



What Can Make Asthma Worse?

Not all factors affect all people. It's important to identify what affects a particular student's asthma.



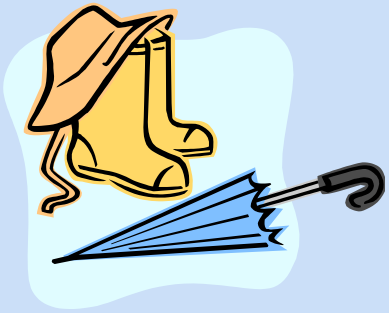
- Infections in the upper airways, such as colds

- Exercise





- Changes in weather and temperature



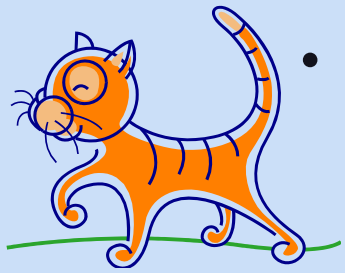
- Physical expressions of strong feelings (crying or laughing hard, yelling)



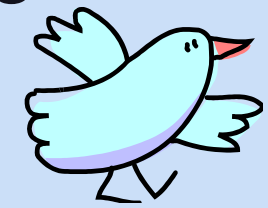


What Can Make Asthma Worse?

Allergens such as:

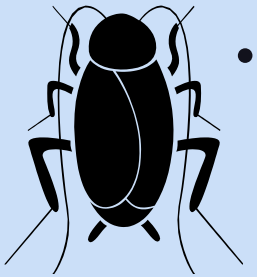


- Furred and feathered animals





- Dust mites



- Cockroaches



- Pollens from grass and trees
- Molds (indoors and outdoors)

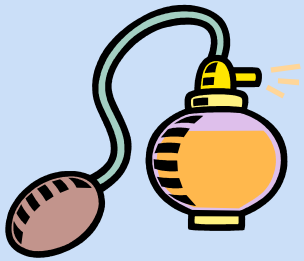
What Can Make Asthma Worse?

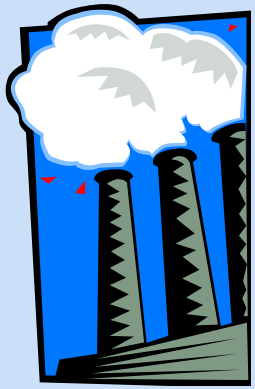
Irritants such as:

- Environmental tobacco smoke



- Scented products





- Outdoor air pollution

- Strong fumes or odors





Is There A Cure For Asthma?

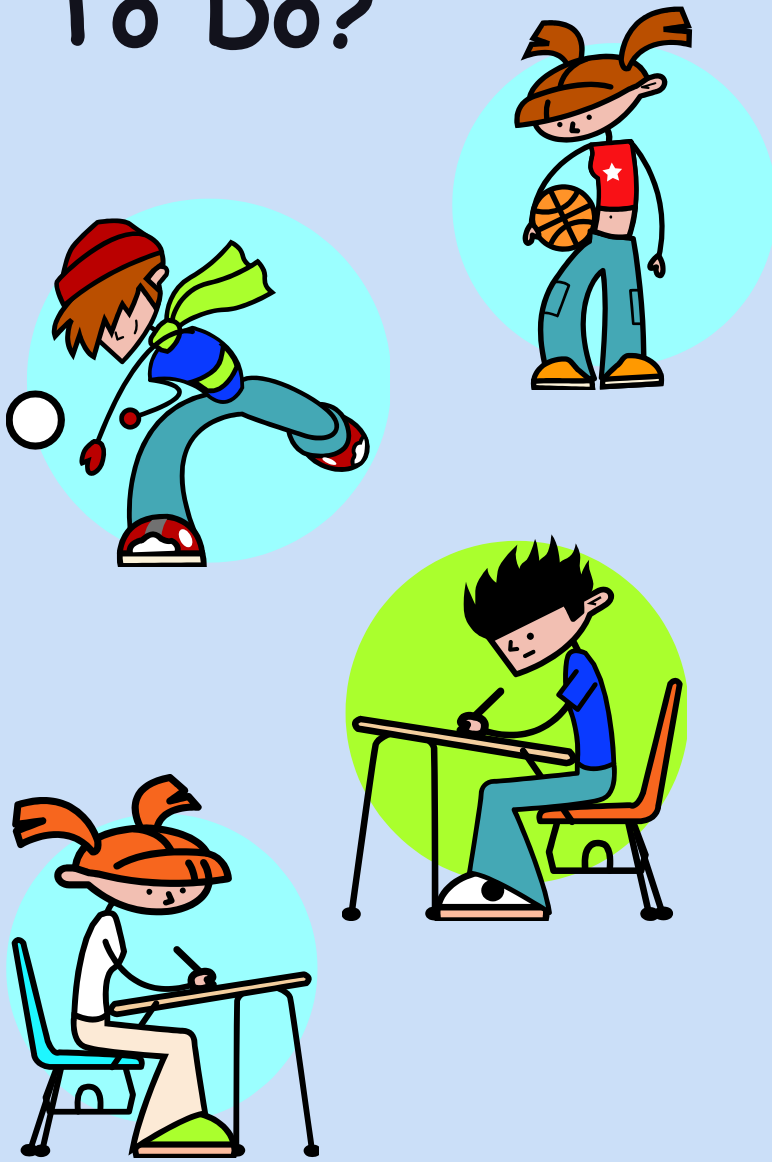
Asthma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled.

Most young people with asthma should be able to live healthy, active lives with minimal symptoms.



What Should Most People with Asthma Be Able To Do?

- Be active without having asthma symptoms; this includes participating in physical activity and sports
- Sleep through the night without having asthma symptoms
- Prevent asthma episodes
- Have the best possible lung function (e.g., good peak flow number)



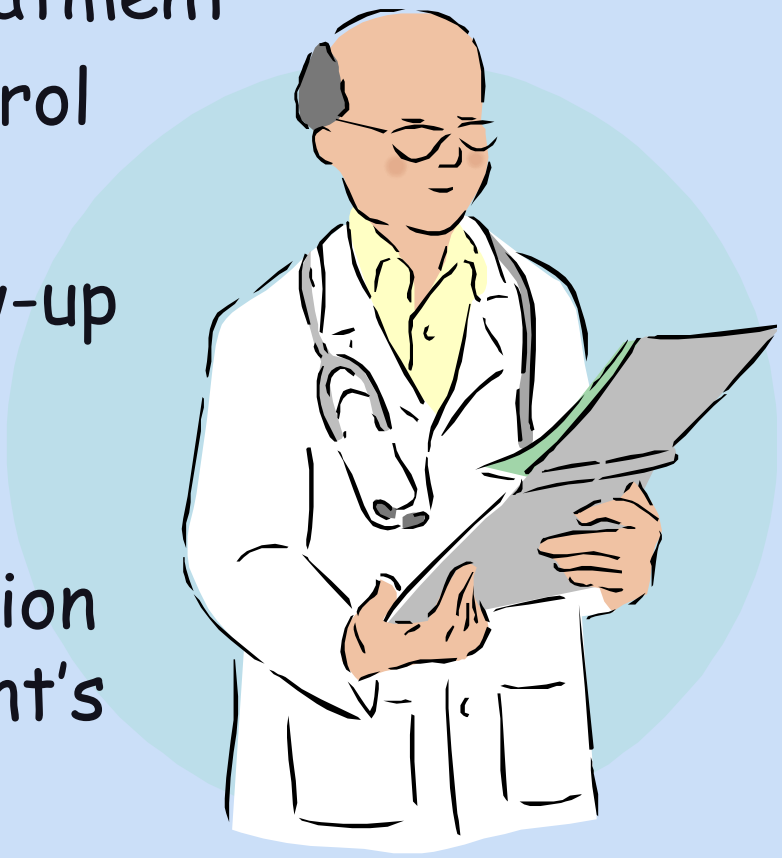
How Is Asthma Controlled?



- Follow an individualized, written asthma action plan
- Reduce or eliminate exposure to things that can cause asthma symptoms
- Encourage and support use of medication as prescribed
  - Quick-relief medicine for all students with asthma
  - Long-term control medicine for students with persistent asthma

How Is Asthma Controlled?

- Monitor response to treatment and level of asthma control
- Encourage regular follow-up care
- Ensure good communication among school, the student's doctor, and home



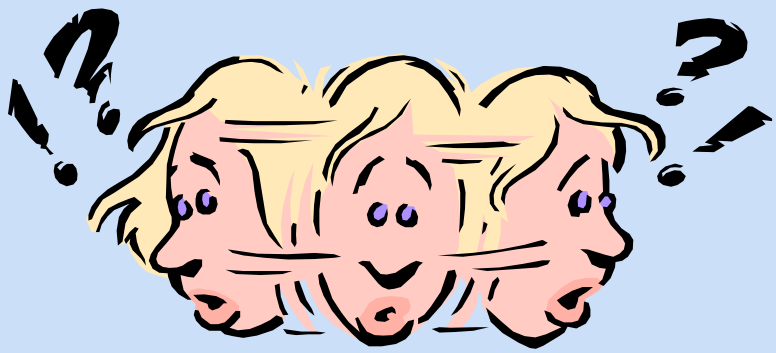
How asthma-friendly is your school?[5]

1. Is your school free of tobacco smoke?
2. May students carry their own asthma medicines?
3. Does your school have an emergency plan for kids with severe asthma episode?



5 National Asthma Education and Prevention Program. How Asthma-Friendly Is Your School?

How asthma-friendly is your school?



4. Do all students with asthma have written asthma action plans at school?

5. Is there a school nurse in your school all day, everyday?

6. Does someone teach school staff and students about asthma?

How asthma-friendly is your school?



7. Can students with asthma fully participate in physical activities?
   - Do they have immediate access to their quick-relief medicine before exercise if appropriate?
   - Can they modify their activities if necessary?
8. Does your school maintain good indoor air quality? e.g., reduce or eliminate things that may cause asthma symptoms

How to treat an attack

- Keep the asthma sufferer calm
- Encourage them to try and take deep breaths
- Take two puffs of reliever inhaler
- After five minutes if symptoms are not improved take a puff for every minute for another five minutes
- If there is no improvement in symptoms call your GP or if in any doubt call 999
- Most asthma attacks can be managed at home, although sometimes, hospitalisation may be required

How to Handle an Asthma Episode

- Quickly evaluate the situation. Call 911 if severe and contact parent/guardian.
- If medicine is not available, call for the school nurse.
- Keep the asthma sufferer calm and take deep breaths
- Take two puffs of reliever inhaler
- After five minutes if symptoms are not improved take a puff for every minute for another five minutes



Conclusion

Schools, families, and the community can work together to help students better manage their asthma.

