ASTHMA

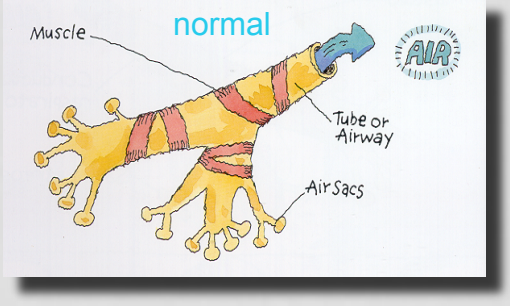
WHAT IS ASTHMA?

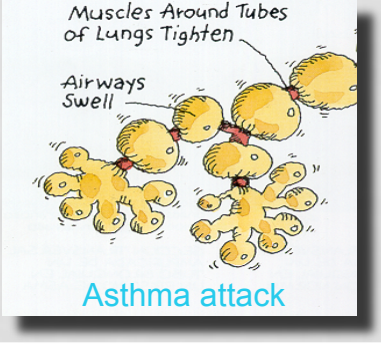
- A reversible, obstructive lung disease caused by an excessive reaction of the airways to certain stimuli or "triggers"
- One of the Reactive Airway Diseases (RAD) that is treatable
- A life-threatening disease if not properly managed

3 COMPONENTS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

1. Bronchospasm

The smooth muscles that wrap around the windpipe (bronchi) tighten, reducing the size of the airway.





COMPONENTS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

2. Inflammation

The mucosal lining of the windpipe becomes inflamed and swells, thereby reducing the size of the airway even further.

3. Mucus

Increased mucus production takes up more space; now the airway is very constricted.

ASTHMA IS NOT:

- **Contagious** – Usually genetic
- **Infectious** – It is a chronic disease
- **A Good Excuse** to lead a sedentary life or become a couch potato!

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF AN ASTHMA ATTACK

- Wheezing, coughing
- Shortness of breath
- Chest feels tight
- Dry mouth
- Fatigue
- Itchy chin or clipped speech
- Headache
- “I don’ t feel well”

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- **Recognize** the early signs and symptoms of an asthma attack

- **Relax,** don't panic
- **Reassure** the student and try to calm them

- **Refer** to the student's health care plan

HOW TO ASSIST THE STUDENT

- Call or have someone call for help

- Ask student if they have an inhaler

- Suggest

Deep coughing to bring up mucus

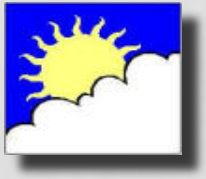
Belly breathe to relax and calm student

WHEN DO YOU CALL ?

- Wheezing or coughing increases after taking medications
- Difficulty breathing
  - -retractions seen
  - -hunched over position
- Child has trouble walking or talking, or stops playing and cannot start again
- Lips or fingernails appear “blue”

PREVENTION:
KNOW ASTHMA ATTACK TRIGGERS!

Pets



Weather

Indoor pollution

Exercise

Pollens

HOW TO USE THE STUDENT'S HEALTH CARE PLAN

- Read the health care plan developed by the school nurse
- Know your student's asthma attack triggers
- Be familiar with emergency action plans
- Contact school nurse with questions