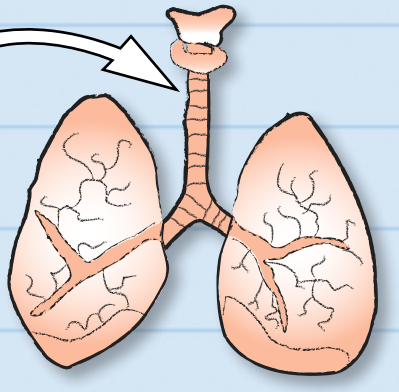
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC)
National Asthma Control Program

Asthma FAST FACTS for Kids

What is Asthma?

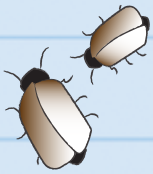
Asthma (az-ma) is when air can't get into your lungs and you have trouble breathing.

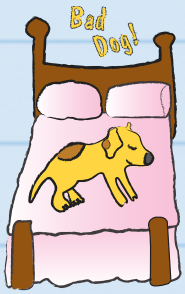
The tubes that take air to your lungs get too tight (like a pinched straw) and this makes it hard for you to breathe.



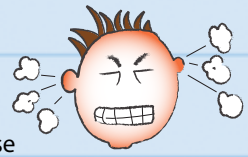
What causes an asthma attack?

An asthma attack is when you have trouble catching your breath. Many different asthma "triggers" can cause this to happen. Some common "triggers" are:





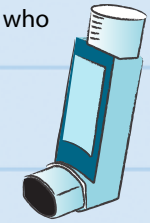
- Dust in your house
- Tobacco smoke
- Dirty air outside
- Cockroach droppings
- Pets
- Mold
- Hard exercise that makes you breathe really fast
- Some medicines
- Bad weather
- Some kinds of food



Things you are worried about can cause an asthma attack. Even getting really excited, or feeling very mad, sad, or scared can cause an asthma attack.

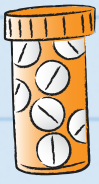
How is asthma treated?

Several different kinds of medicine help people with asthma. People who have asthma don't always take the same medicine.



Some people use **INHALERS** to breathe in the asthma medicine. An INHALER is a little can of special air you squirt into your mouth and then breathe in.

Some people take pills to help them breathe better.



Some asthma medicine (mostly inhalers) is what you take when you need breathing help **RIGHT NOW**! You take this **QUICK HELP** medicine when you have an ASTHMA ATTACK.

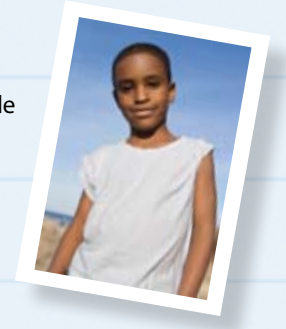
Other asthma medicine you would just take every day to help you avoid having too many bad asthma attacks.

Even if you are not having trouble breathing, you need to take this **EVERYDAY** medicine. But this everyday medicine will **NOT** help if you have an asthma attack. When you have an asthma attack, you need to take your **QUICK HELP** medicine.

You CAN Control Your Asthma!

Your doctor's office can help you make a plan just for you to help you control your asthma. A good plan means that

- You won't have as many asthma attacks
- You won't wheeze and cough as much, or maybe not at all
- You will sleep better
- You won't miss school
- You can play sports and games outside and at school
- You won't have to go to the hospital!

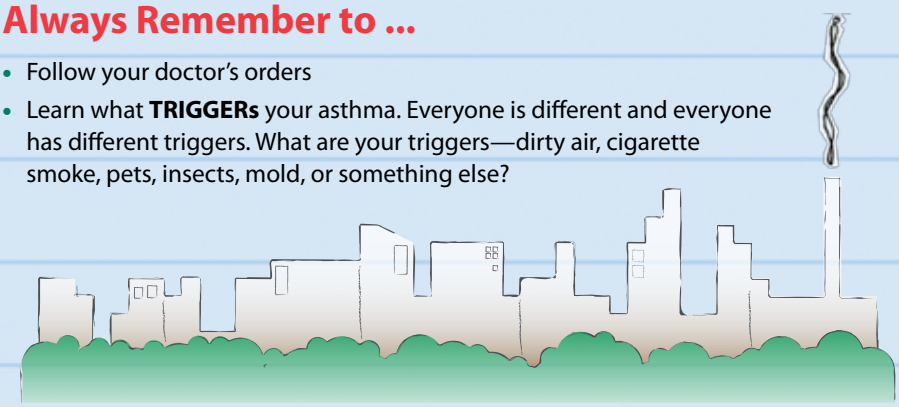


National Center for Environmental Health
Division of Environmental Hazards and Health Effects

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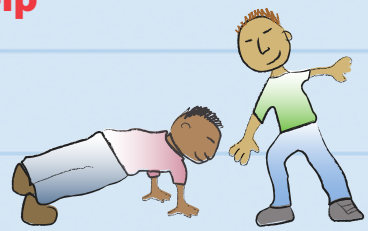
Always Remember to ...

- Follow your doctor's orders
- Learn what **TRIGGERs** your asthma. Everyone is different and everyone has different triggers. What are your triggers—dirty air, cigarette smoke, pets, insects, mold, or something else?



- If you have been running or playing and feel out of breath, stop and take a break!
- Know the warning signs of an asthma attack
  - » Wheezing and coughing
  - » Breathing too hard and too fast
  - » A feeling of tightness in your chest
- Whenever you leave the house, always take your **QUICK HELP** inhaler with you!

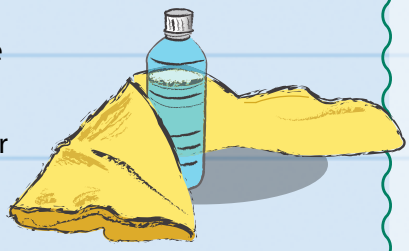
When you exercise, you will help your asthma... IF you follow these tips



Go easy — start exercising slowly and finish your exercise with a cool-down.

Take a buddy — play or excercise with a friend.

Know your triggers — stay away from the things that can trigger your asthma.



Take breaks — they will help you catch your breath. And drink plenty of water.

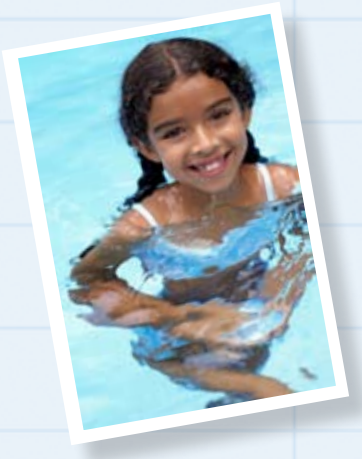
Mix it up — do different activities, like inline skating one day and taking a long walk the next day.

Check air quality — exercise outside only when the air is clean. Before you exercise, check the weather on TV or on a computer to see how clean the air is.





In 2000, more than one quarter of the swimmers on the US Olympics team had asthma and used inhalers.



Asthma didn't hold them back and asthma shouldn't hold YOU back!!!



Note: The next update of this fact sheet is scheduled for June 2011. More recent information may be available at the CDC's Air Pollution and Respiratory Health Branch's Asthma Web site at http://www.cdc.gov/asthma.

