

WHAT SCHOOL PERSONNEL SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE STUDENT WITH ASTHMA

Prepared by the Jordan School District School Nurses

GENERAL INFORMATION

Asthma is the most common chronic disease of childhood. Most children have relatively mild asthma which can be controlled by medication. But on occasion certain factors may result in the child displaying such symptoms as wheezing or a dry hacking cough or even severe breathing difficulty. Some asthma medications can cause side effects which may manifest themselves as behavior changes.

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 passageways. Mucus is secreted into bronchial tubes narrowing and plugging air passages.

COMMON ASTHMA TRIGGERS

Allergens such as pollen, animal dander, dust mites and molds
Irritants such as cold air, strong odors, weather changes and cigarette smoke
Upper respiratory infections such as cold or flu
Physical exercise, especially in cold weather

SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS OF ASTHMA

MILD EPISODE

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

ACTION TO TAKE IN CASE OF BREATHING DIFFICULTY

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 school nurse, parents or guardians.

ASTHMA EMERGENCY

Nose flaring	Neck muscles tight
Bluish nail beds or lips	Chest retraction (chest sucked in)
Failure of medication to reduce worsening symptoms.	

ACTION TO TAKE

Call parents or 911

**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.
Talk with the child. His/her anxiety can be lessened if you show you understand and know how to be helpful. Communication is the key. Turn an asthma episode into a learning experience for the entire class. Explain what asthma is and help the classmates to continue to accept the child.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION SHOULD BE OBTAINED FROM THE PARENTS

Child's Name

Date

Parent's Name

Address

Phone

Alternate Person to Call in Emergency

Relationship

Phone

Physician's Name

Address

Phone

Signs and symptoms the child usually exhibits preceding asthma attack _____

SIGNATURES:

Substitute teachers and/or special teachers should have access to the above information.