



INSIDE:
Your asthma
action plan



Fall 2013

Lifestyles

for children and
teens with **Asthma**

Relaxation to the rescue

Have you ever had days when you just felt stressed out? Maybe you were worried about a test at school or you had a fight with a friend. Upsetting things happen to everybody. When they do, it's normal to feel anxious. But sometimes, these feelings make asthma worse. Here are two great ways you can shake off stress and start to feel better.

- **Big belly breath.** Lie down on the floor and wiggle your body a little to get comfortable. Then lie still with one hand on your stomach. Now breathe in through your nose slowly and deeply. Try to breathe all the way into your stomach, so you feel your belly rise under your hand. Now slowly breathe out through your mouth. Feel your belly go back down. Do this five times. Each time you exhale, let your body sink into the floor or ground.
- **Melting ice cream.** Lie on the floor and get comfortable. Take a couple of deep breaths and let them out. Now imagine you're a big scoop of ice cream on a warm sidewalk. The sun is shining, and you feel warm and happy. Now imagine you're starting to melt. Feel the warm sun, little by little, melting you into a puddle. When you're completely melted, lie still, feeling warm and relaxed.

Try doing these relaxation exercises often. The more you practice, the better you'll get. Then you'll be able to relax quickly the next time you feel stressed out.

✓ Health checks

Every year, ask your child's doctor about these wellness checks. Your child may need them more than once a year.

- ✓ **Update your child's action plan**
- ✓ **Review your child's quick-relief and long-term control medicines**
- ✓ **Have your child take a pulmonary function test**

Be sure your child has regular well visits. During these visits, your child's doctor will make sure your child's vaccines are up to date, including flu shots. Also, check with your doctor to see if your child's pneumonia shot is up to date.



Tips for parents: Asthma prep for back-to-school

When the school bell rings, you want to know that your child's asthma is well-managed at school. The best way to prepare the school staff to meet your child's needs is to work with your child's doctor and develop an asthma action plan.

You and your child should plan to meet with the school nurse, teachers and coaches early in the school year. Review your child's asthma plan and discuss any school policies that affect your child's asthma management.

You'll also want to know whether the school nurse has a peak-flow meter and nebulizer available. Please provide a copy of the asthma action plan to your child's coaches and teachers. With a good plan in place, both you and your child will breathe easier.

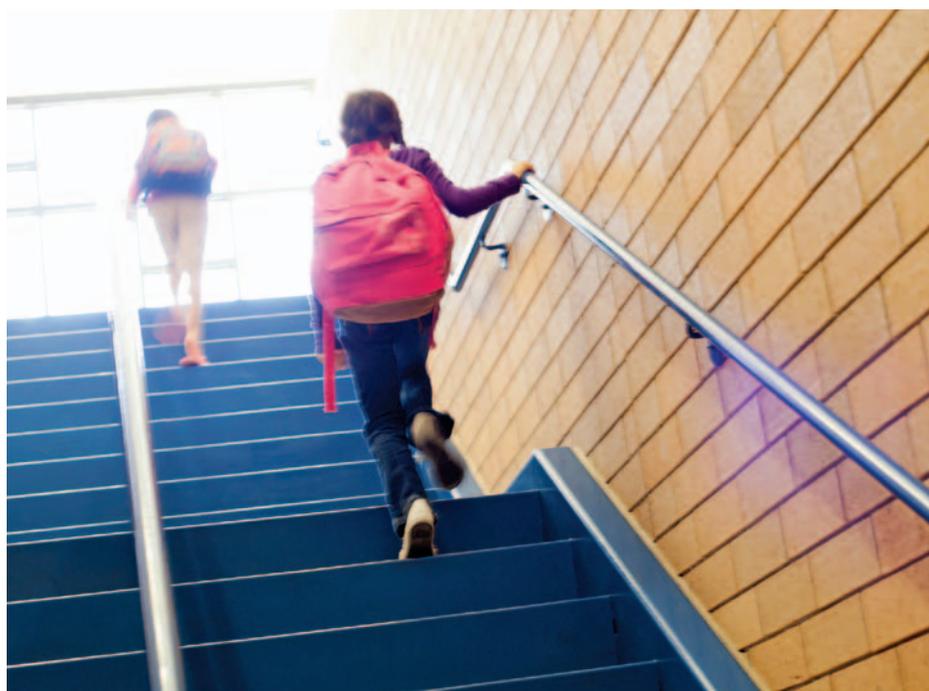
Need an action plan?

We've included one in this issue. Take it to your child's next appointment and fill it out with the doctor. Keep a copy of your child's asthma action plan handy at all times. Anyone else who helps care for your child should have a copy, too. That includes babysitters and the staff at any day care center, school or camp your child attends.

Schedule a flu shot

With asthma, your child's airways are already inflamed and sensitive. The flu virus increases this inflammation further, worsening symptoms. Your child can also develop pneumonia, a potentially serious lung infection, as a result.

Vaccines, hand hygiene and regular medical follow ups offer the best protection against this. If your child didn't receive a flu shot last year, make sure you get him or her one this year as soon as it's available.





My child's asthma action plan

The colors of the traffic light will help your child use asthma medicines. Take this form to your child's doctor to fill out. Then make two copies. Keep the original. Give one copy to your child's doctor and one to your child's school.

Name _____ Date of birth _____ Effective date _____ to _____
Doctor _____ Phone _____ Parent or guardian _____ Phone _____
Emergency contact _____ Phone _____
Child is able to self-medicate Yes or No Doctor's signature _____

GREEN ZONE means GO.

You have **ALL** of these:

- Breathing is good
- No cough or wheeze
- Sleep through the night
- Can work or play
- Peak flow above:

Use these medicines every day:

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

For asthma with exercise, take:

YELLOW ZONE means CAUTION.

You have **ANY** of these symptoms:

- First sign of a cold
- Exposure to known trigger
- Cough
- Mild wheeze
- Tight chest
- Coughing at night
- Peak flow from: to

Continue with GREEN ZONE medicine and ADD:

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
First > _____	_____	_____
Next > _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If a quick-relief or **YELLOW ZONE** medicine is needed more than two to three times a week, **call your doctor.**

RED ZONE means DANGER!

Your asthma is getting worse fast:

- Medicine is not helping within 15 to 20 minutes
- Breathing is hard and fast
- Nose opens wide
- Ribs show
- Lips and/or fingernails are blue
- Trouble walking and talking
- Peak flow below:

Take these medicines and call your doctor:

Medicine	How much to take	When to take it
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Get help from a doctor now. Your doctor will want to see your child right away. It is important. If you cannot contact your child's doctor, go directly to the emergency room. **DO NOT WAIT.** Make an appointment with your child's primary care physician within two days of an ER visit or hospitalization.

My child's asthma action plan *continued*



Asthma trigger checklist

Check all items that trigger your child's asthma and could make his or her symptoms worse. Talk with your child's doctor about how to best manage these triggers.

- Chalk
- Cigarette smoke and secondhand smoke
- Colds or flu
- Dust mites
- Exercise
- Mold
- Pests — cockroaches
- Pets — animal dander
- Pollen
- Poor air quality
- Strong odors, perfumes
- Sudden temperature change
- Wood smoke
- Foods: _____
- Other: _____

Recognizing asthma triggers

It's important to know what can trigger your child's asthma. This can help you control the environment to minimize or eliminate those things. Here are some common asthma triggers:



Allergens: Common allergens are pollens, molds and animal dander.



Irritants: Inflamed airways are very sensitive to environmental irritants, including:

- Air pollutants, such as tobacco smoke, wood smoke and chemicals in the air
- Strong smells or sprays, such as perfumes, household cleaners or cooking fumes
- Changing weather conditions, such as changes in temperature and humidity



Infections: Colds, the flu and pneumonia can trigger or aggravate asthma.



Exercise: Physical activity can trigger attacks in certain circumstances. Swimming is good because warm, moist air helps prevent attacks.



Medicines: Certain medicines, including aspirin and ibuprofen, can cause asthma attacks in some children.



Food: Some foods or food additives can trigger asthma symptoms. Foods to be careful with include dried fruit, processed potatoes, peanuts and shrimp.

If you don't know your child's triggers, try to limit exposure to one possible trigger at a time. Watch to see if your child gets better. This may show you if the trigger is a problem.

Keep colds from complicating your asthma

Colds may trigger your asthma symptoms. They also increase your risk of having asthma attacks, going to the hospital, or getting pneumonia or bronchitis.

So what can you do when you don't feel well?

Seek relief with self-care strategies

When you're struck with the latest bug, take these steps:

- Get plenty of rest and drink lots of fluids. Stay home from school so you don't overdo it.
- Gargle with warm salt water if you have a sore or scratchy throat. Petroleum jelly can soothe a raw or irritated nose.

- Eat some soup. The heat, fluid and salt in chicken soup may also help you fight infection.

Don't let symptoms get out of control

Keep a close watch over your asthma symptoms while you're under the weather. If your breathing problems wake you up at night or limit your regular activities, follow the steps in your asthma action plan or tell your parent or guardian. You may need a trip to the doctor. If your symptoms get worse or severe, contact your doctor right away.



Protect your child from secondhand smoke

Would you hand your toddler a cigar or let your baby puff a cigarette? When around smokers, your child breathes many of the same harmful chemicals they do.

Exposure to secondhand smoke can make asthma worse for those who already have it. It also can cause other lung problems and ear infections.

Try these tips to smoke-proof your child's life:

- **Enforce a total ban.** This goes for your home and car. Sending smokers to the basement or bedroom won't cut it. Neither will fans, open windows or expensive ventilation systems. Even small amounts of secondhand smoke are harmful.
- **Enlist professional help.** Have reluctant relatives? Ask your doctor or your child's doctor to explain how smoking indoors puts little ones at risk. He or she might even influence your loved ones to kick the habit.
- **Use life changes as opportunities.** Major life events — think buying a house or bringing home a baby — offer a chance to set new household rules about smoking.





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➤ HEALTHY LIVING AND GOOD EATING

Tortilla Pizzas

Servings: 8



12 small corn or flour tortillas
Vegetable oil
1 16-ounce can refried beans
¼ cup chopped onion
2 ounces canned green chili peppers, diced (optional)

6 tablespoons red taco sauce
3 cups chopped vegetables, such as broccoli, mushrooms, spinach and bell peppers
½ cup shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese

Brush one side of each of the two tortillas with water. Press the wet sides of the tortillas together to form a thick crust for the pizza. Brush the outside of the tortillas with a small amount of vegetable oil. Evenly brown both sides in a heated frying pan. Repeat with the rest of the tortillas. Set aside. Heat refried beans, chopped onion and half of the diced chili peppers together in a medium saucepan, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat.

Spread about 1/3 cup of the bean mixture on each tortilla pizza. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon taco sauce, then top with 1/2 cup chopped vegetables, 1 teaspoon of diced chili peppers if desired and 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese for each pizza. Return to frying pan and heat until cheese melts. Serve immediately.

Nutritional information per serving: 270 calories; 7 g fat; 42 g carbohydrates; 5 mg cholesterol; 370 mg sodium.