

# Asthma and Your Child

Asthma is a disease that affects the airways in the lungs. It causes the airways to become sore and swollen when air moves in and out.

Children with this disease have trouble because their airways are much smaller than adults. When their airways become irritated, mucus can build up making it difficult for even a small amount of air to get through.

You can see why this can be very scary and painful for children.

## Asthma Signs and Symptoms:

- **Dry hacking cough, wheezing and tightness in chest**
- **Easily tired and out of breath**
- **Fast breathing when resting**

*\*Asthma is usually worse at nighttime when lying down*

When asthma symptoms become worse than usual, the airways tighten and narrow causing an asthma attack. Your child may feel like he is breathing through a small straw or may not be able to breathe at all.

## Asthma attacks can be caused by:

- **Allergies: animal hair, rodents, cockroaches, dust mites, mold, pollen from trees and grass**
- **Exercise (Exercised-Induced Asthma)**
- **Illness: common cold, flu**
- **Weather: cold air**
- **Irritants: perfume, scented items, smoke**

**\* DO NOT SMOKE!!! If you smoke, quit. This is the single best thing you can do to control your child's asthma**

Fortunately there are measures you can take to help a child with asthma live easier. It is important to talk with your primary care doctor to see which option is best for your child.

## Medications and Treatment:

- **Long-Term Controller Medications: Taken daily, these help control chronic symptoms and reduce asthma attacks**
- **Quick-Relief Medications: Used to quickly prevent or treat an asthma attack and relieve short-term symptoms**



Medications can be taken through inhalers, nebulizers and pills. Again, based on your child's age and preference, your primary care doctor will help find which one works best.

Children with asthma can lead a normal life. You can help them do this by reducing causes of asthma attacks and making sure they are using medications as prescribed by their doctor.

## If your child is having an asthma attack, call 911 if:

- **Child has hard or fast breathing**
- **Child is unable to talk or walk**
- **Lips and fingers turn blue**
- **Signs of panic in child**