ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS (K-12): Management and Emergency Information

what is asthma?

During an asthma episode:
- The airways swell
- Excess mucous production clogs airways
- Muscles around the airways tighten

Symptoms of Asthma

Each individual has his/her own set of symptoms. If you know a student has asthma, or suspect they do, watch for these **warning signs** to indicate uncontrolled asthma or a potential asthma episode:

- Cough (persistent or with physical activity)
- Wheeze
- Shortness of breath
- Student reports tightness in the chest
- Consistent use of inhaler
- Tired at school (waking at night with asthma symptoms)
- School absence due to asthma
- Stomach aches
- Headaches

Asthma Triggers in School Settings:

- chalk dust
- classroom animals
- mold, mildew
- strong odors (scented body products, markers, air fresheners, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- art class and shop materials
- cold temperatures
- output from idling school buses and vehicles
- dust mites
- pollens
- smoke
- pests
There are two basic types of medications:

1. **Quick Relief | ALBUTEROL**
   - Used to reduce asthma symptoms, before exercise, and during an emergency!
   - Ideally, everyone with asthma has access to quick relief medication at school.

   **AN INHALER GIVES A METERED DOSE OF MEDICATION.**
   **A SPACER INCREASES EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDICATION DELIVERY.**

2. **Controller**
   - Ideally, used at home daily to prevent inflammation and episodes.
   - Not prescribed for everyone with asthma and often underutilized.

**Asthma & Exercise**

- Pre-medicate with quick relief medication (albuterol) 15 minutes prior to activity.
- Keep quick relief inhaler available and accessible during activity/physical education class.
- If symptoms occur during activity, stop exercise and utilize quick relief medication, if necessary.
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- Keep Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) System running when people are in the room and don’t obstruct air vents.

- Ensure windows are open and air is flowing.

- Keep building free of condensation, mold/mildew, dampness or leaks, and maintain average zone for humidity.

- Avoid scented products (Plug-Ins, air fresheners, cleaning products, perfumes, etc.)

- Minimize clutter and store art supplies and cleaning supplies in closed containers.

- Clean classrooms daily, remove trash, and keep free of pests and vermin.

- Minimize use of carpets and increase use of tile and hardwood floors.

- Use fake plants or low allergen plants. See [http://calasthma.org/resources/show_resource/448/](http://calasthma.org/resources/show_resource/448/)

- Have a “no pets allowed” rule or minimize exposure.

- Use only cleaning products approved by district, prioritizing the least toxic and/or green products.
how to help during an asthma episode

::: Stay calm, speak reassuringly, keep the student upright.
::: If child has medication in the classroom (self-carry law allows this), administer and call school nurse.
::: If child has medication in the front office/nurse’s office, send them accompanied to the office and call school nurse.
::: If child has NO MEDICATION at the school site, call parent/guardian, school nurse, and front office right away.

for an asthma emergency

Always stay calm, keep student upright, and don’t leave the student alone!

CALL 911:
::: if student is having an asthma emergency and has no quick relief medication.
::: if student is having an asthma emergency and is unable to control it with their quick relief medication (continued shortness of breath, straining to breathe, symptoms getting worse).
::: immediately if a student can’t walk or talk, or a student’s lips or nails are blue.