

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



ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS: Management and Emergency Information



medications

there are two basic types:

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 under utilized.



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.



ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS: Management and Emergency Information



healthy school environments



- ⋮ 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/
- ⋮ Have a "no pets allowed" rule or minimize exposure.
- ⋮ Use only cleaning products approved by district, prioritizing the least toxic and/or green products.



ASTHMA IN SCHOOLS: Management and Emergency Information



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.



more information

RAMP [Regional Asthma Management & Prevention]
180 Grand Ave., Suite 750 | Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: 510.302.3318 | Fax: 510.451.8606
www.rampasthma.org

or contact your school nurse

