

# Asthma

For Employees of the Randolph County  
School System

# What is Asthma?

Asthma is a disease that affects your lungs. It is one of the most common long-term diseases of children, but adults can also have asthma.

# Symptoms of an Asthma Attack

- Wheezing
- Breathlessness
- Chest tightness
- Coughing
- Sweating
- Inability to talk

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# Asthma Triggers

A trigger is anything that sets off or starts an asthma attack. They include:

- Dust and smoke
- Air pollution
- Respiratory infections
- Fear or anxiety
- Perfume
- Exercise
- Plants and mold
- Medications, such as aspirin
- Animal dander
- Changes in weather (extreme temperatures)

# Preventing Asthma Attacks

Prevention is the key.

Follow these preventative measures to reduce an asthma attack.

- Limit triggers
- Control emotions
- Prevent infections
- Reduce environmental triggers
- Exercise carefully



# Preventing Infections

- Colds and other respiratory infections can make an asthma condition worse.
- One of the most common ways to catch a cold is by rubbing the nose or eyes with hands infected with the cold virus.
- Infection often occurs by touching surfaces (such as doorknobs) or objects that other people have touched.



# Preventing Infections

Some ways to reduce the chances of getting a cold or other respiratory infection include:

- Washing hands regularly, especially after using the restroom or shaking hands with other people and before eating.
- Cleaning environmental surfaces, such as desks, with a virus-killing disinfectant.
  - The viruses that cause colds can survive up to 3 hours on objects such as desks, doorknobs, counters, etc.
  - Disinfect these areas often
- Getting vaccinated for the flu, whooping cough (pertussis) when a vaccine is available



# Medications for Asthma

- Available in 2 forms:
  - Long-term
  - Quick relief
- Long-term:
  - Prevent or reverse inflammation (swelling) in the airway
  - Help to decrease sensitivity, which helps keep the airways from reacting to asthma triggers
- Quick Relief (“rescue” or “short acting”):
  - Used to stop an asthma attack
  - Work quickly to relieve the sudden swelling
  - Lessen wheezing, coughing and chest tightness
  - Allows the person to breathe easier



# Methods of Delivery

- Inhalation is the most common method of taking long-term and quick-relief asthma medications
- Inhalation allows the medication to reach the airways faster and work quicker
- Medications are inhaled by using metered dose inhalers (MDI), a dry powder inhaler (DPI) or a small-volume nebulizer
- Pill forms are for both long-term and quick-relief medications
- Long-term medications are also available in the form of an injection



# Asthma Summary

- Is a life-long lung disease that affects millions
- Can be controlled if you know the triggers for it and how to limit those triggers
- Taking prescribed medication can also limit attacks
- To help those having an attack:
  - Know the signs of an attack
    - Wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, coughing, sweating, inability to talk, etc.
  - Act quickly
  - Give appropriate care