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
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.
  o The viruses that cause colds can survive up to 3 hours on objects such as desks, doorknobs, counters, etc.
  o Disinfect these areas often

• Getting vaccinated for the flu, whooping cough (pertussis) when a vaccine is available.
Medications for Asthma

• Available in 2 forms:
  o Long-term
  o Quick relief

• Long-term:
  o Prevent or reverse inflammation (swelling) in the airway
  o Help to decrease sensitivity, which helps keep the airways from reacting to asthma triggers

• Quick Relief (“rescue” or “short acting”):
  o Used to stop an asthma attack
  o Work quickly to relieve the sudden swelling
  o Lessen wheezing, coughing and chest tightness
  o 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:
  o Know the signs of an attack
    • Wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness, coughing, sweating, inability to talk, etc.
  o Act quickly
  o Give appropriate care