



Asthma Management at School Tips for the Classroom Teacher

In Case of an Asthma Flare-up or Exacerbation

- Know the early warning signs and symptoms of an asthma flare-up
- Know the signs of an asthma emergency
- Have a copy of each child's asthma action plan in the classroom. Review it with the student and parent and nurse. Know what steps to take in case of an asthma flare-up
- Develop a clear procedure with the student and parent for handling schoolwork missed due to asthma
- Allow the student to engage in quiet activity if recovery from an acute flare-up

Be Sensitive to Emotional Factors

Understand that a student with asthma may feel:

- Drowsy or tired
- Different from the other kids
- Anxious about access to medication
- Nervous, excitable or "antsy" due to asthma medications
- Embarrassed about the disruption to school activities that an asthma episode causes
- Withdrawn, angry or depressed

Help the student feel more comfortable by recognizing these feelings. Be aware of school policies regarding access to medication. Legally, students may now carry and self-administer medications with parental and physician approval, on file with school nurse. Learn which students have that privilege. Try to maintain confidentiality. Without singling out students with asthma, educate classmates about asthma so they will be more understanding.

Understand the Effects of Asthma Medications, Allergic Triggers and Irritants

- Know the possible side effects of asthma medications and how they may impact the student's performance in the classroom. Refer any problem to the school nurse and parent. Common side effects of medicine that warrant referral are nervousness, nausea, jitteriness, hyperactivity, and drowsiness
- Reduce known allergens in the classroom to help students who have allergies. Almost 70% of asthma patients have asthma symptoms triggered by allergies. Common allergens and irritants found in classrooms include chalk dust, animals, and strong odors (perfumes, paints, markers).

Encourage the students with asthma to participate fully in physical activities according to his ability.