

ASTHMA



DEFINITION:

Asthma is a respiratory disease, which includes a wide range of causes. An inhaler that delivers medication directly to the lungs is often used. Some inhalers work best prior to exercise. Students with asthma tend to be sensitive to **weather changes, heavy exercise, pet dander, body temperature changes, pollution, dust, grass, smog, and cigarette smoke**. Two basic types based on causes of an attack. Extrinsic (Allergic) Asthma: Allergens cause an over reaction of immune system. Intrinsic (Non-Allergic) Asthma: Some causes are emotional stress, infections, exercise, cold air, and food additives.

POSSIBLE CHARACTERISTICS:

- Breathing difficulties
- Coughing
- Wheezing
- Possibly a “barrel chest” appearance or rounded shoulders posture

COMMONLY USED MEDICATIONS:

- Ventolin
- Alupent
- Proventol
- Intal
- Albuterol

FIRST AID:

- Assist the student with inhalers by providing controlled access to them during exercise.
- Use cool, wet towels on the back of the neck to assist in body temperature control.
- Make the student comfortable and monitor breathing difficulties and seek help if needed.

TEACHING TIPS:

- Communicate with parents, physician and school nurse regarding allergens, side effects of medications, and emergency procedures.
- Watch for fatigue and signs of overexertion such as redness in the face.

- Be sure to include warm-up exercises that are slow, long and include stretching of pectorals.
- Remind the student to breathe through the nose.
- Include breathing control exercise utilizing the diaphragm.
- Remind the student with asthma to drink adequate water during the class period.
- Encourage diaphragmatic breathing.
- Let the student be the guide in the level of activity at any given time, and provide alternate ways for the student to be part of the class when necessary.
- Avoid placing individual near allergens such as dust, fresh cut grass, and smog.
- Use caution on hot and humid, or windy and polluted days and amount of aerobic exercise.
- Avoid exposing student to sudden temperature changes.
- Encourage aquatics as activity of choice.

Information on this sheet contains only suggested guidelines. Each student must be considered individually, and in many cases, a physician's written consent should be obtained.