WHAT IS ASTHMA?

• Asthma is a breathing problem caused by swelling of the airways in the lungs.

• When you have asthma, your airways are easily irritated.

• People who have asthma may cough, wheeze or complain of feeling “tight” in the chest.

• Asthma can reduce oxygen in the brain, disrupt sleep, hurt school and work performance, and cause death.

COMMON TRIGGERS

Exposure to triggers can cause asthma attacks and asthma “flare ups” that last for days, weeks or longer.

Allergens

• Dust mites (tiny bugs that live in dust)

• Cats, dogs, and other pets

• Roaches, mice, rats

• Mold

• Pollen

Irritants

• Air pollution from cars, power plants and factories

• Smoke of any kind: tobacco, incense, firewood

• Chemicals found in scented products, paints, cleaners, and glues

Common colds can also trigger asthma flare-ups. Some people have exercise-induced asthma.

Managing asthma during colds and exercise is do-able, and much easier when other triggers are reduced and medication is used properly.

RED FLAGS!

If your child has some or all of these “red flags”, life could be much better for them with asthma and allergy care:

• Frequent colds, headaches, sneezing, congestion and/or sinus irritation or infections

• Sleeping poorly or waking up feeling tired, feeling tired all day

• Frequent coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath

• Dark circles under the eyes

• Easily upset, sad, nervous, restless or wanting to be alone

• More than three asthma attacks per week

For help with mold, roaches, mice and rats, and finding smoke-free housing, call 517-887-4312.

To learn more about reducing dust mites, air pollution and chemical irritants, call 517-272-4144.
BREATHING EASY

STEP ONE: Get a primary care doctor for your child. If you need help getting insurance or finding a doctor, call 517-887-4306.

STEP TWO: Ask your doctor for “spirometry” tests starting at age 5 if your child has symptoms, and to retest at least once per year if to see if medications need to change.

STEP THREE: Ask your doctor to create and Asthma Action Plan for your child to help you remember medicines and triggers, and to keep on file at your child’s school.

ASThma ACTION PLAN

The Asthma Action Plan is KEY because it will explain the normal breathing range for your child, how to measure breathing at home, and how to avoid triggers and give medicine.

Ask your doctor for 3 copies of the AAP so you can keep one at home, one at school, and one at any other place your child spends a lot of time.

Ask your doctor to note on the AAP if your child should possess their inhaler at all times and self-administer their medication, or if use of inhaler should be supervised or administered by school staff.

This guide suggests things you can do to avoid asthma attacks. Like in the next one triggers that the people who are allergic to inhaled allergens such as dust mites, pets, and cockroaches.

Most primary care doctors follow national guidelines for asthma diagnosis and treatment, which includes spirometry testing and Asthma Action Plans. If your doctor does not yet have equipment or experience with these practices, you can ask them to refer you to an allergist or pulmonologist, who all use these tools, or you can “self-refer” by making your own appointment with a specialist.

Visit www.midmichasthma.org to learn more about prescription (medicine) help, reducing triggers and other free events & resources.

For More Information: go to www.mideasy.org

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