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Did you know that some people don't know they have asthma?

We all have a tendency to ignore things sometimes. Maybe you get really tired during exercise and blame it on just being out of shape. Perhaps you have a bad cough that gets worse at night but think nothing of it. Or, maybe you hear a whistling or squeaky sound and have trouble breathing sometimes but have never talked to a doctor about it.


Asthma is not something to take lightly.

One in 15 Americans suffers from asthma. According to some reports, each day about 11 people die from the disease in the U.S. and more than 1,000 people are admitted to the hospital.

But asthma is something that can be managed with proper prevention and treatment. The first thing one needs to do is check with a doctor to see if you or your loved one has asthma.

Children in particular may have "hidden" or undiagnosed asthma. Asthma is actually the leading serious chronic illness of children in the U.S. According to reports, in 2006 an estimated 6.8 million children under age 18 had asthma. Asthma is the third leading cause of hospitalization among children under the age of 15.

Sometimes we ignore the symptoms, but it is important to check with your doctor about asthma.

If you or your loved one has the condition your doctor can help get it under control. 



UNDERSTANDING ASTHMA

Asthma is a recurring lung disease that affects your airways. It affects about 20 million people in the United States.

If you have asthma, your airways react strongly to things you are allergic to or find irritating. These are called triggers. Your airways get smaller and allow less air to flow to your lungs because of these triggers.

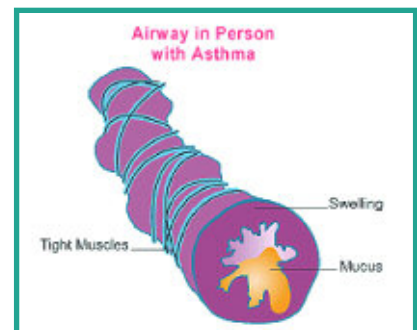
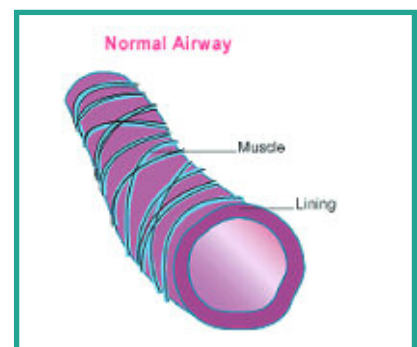
Common symptoms of asthma:

- ▶ Wheezing (a whistling sound when you breathe)
- ▶ Coughing (particularly worse at night)
- ▶ Chest feels tight
- ▶ Trouble breathing (especially at night or in the morning)
- ▶ You get tired easily

An asthma episode or attack occurs when symptoms get worse.


Common triggers for asthma include:

- ▶ Pet dander
- ▶ Dust
- ▶ Pollen and mold



▶ Tobacco smoke, strong odors and sprays

▶ Exercise

It is important to know the signs and symptoms that trigger your symptoms so you can control your asthma and reduce your chances of an attack. 

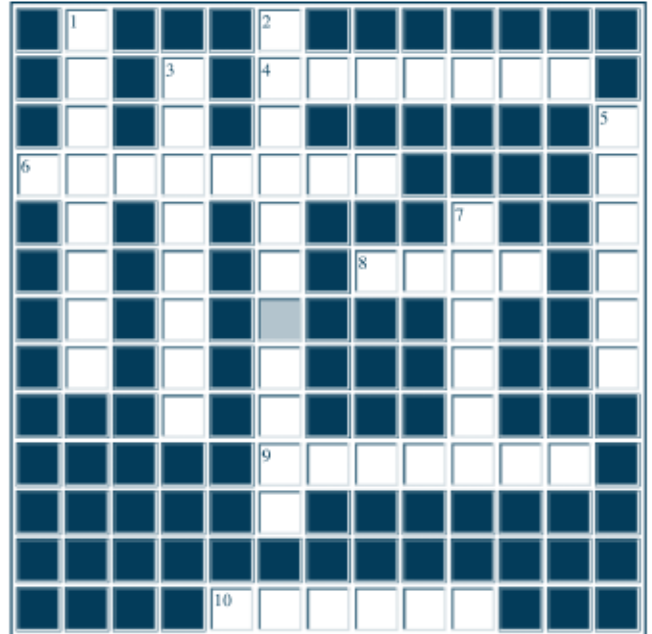
TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR ASTHMA PUZZLE

Across

4. Knowing the signs and symptoms that trigger your asthma can help you _____ it.
6. It is important for your child to always have access to this at school.
8. This is a common household trigger of asthma.
9. Asthma affects this part of your lungs.
10. When asthma symptoms get worse it is called an _____.

Down

1. A common symptom of asthma that causes a whistling sound when breathing.
2. It is important that you provide your child's school with this before he or she starts school.
3. Allergies and things that irritate your asthma are called _____.
5. The best person to answer your questions about your child's asthma.
7. A chronic lung disease that affects 22 million Americans taking control of your asthma



Across 4. Control 6. Medicine 8. Dust 9. Airways 10. Attack
Down 1. Wheezing 2. Action Plan 3. Triggers 5. Doctor 7. Asthma

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Call your RN Care Manager for more information and to receive an asthma action plan.

CREATE AN ASTHMA ACTION PLAN

Give written details of symptoms to watch.

Have a list of your child's medicine with instructions of when and how each should be taken.

Tell your child's teacher about any allergies and asthma triggers to avoid.

Provide emergency contact information.

Call your RN Care Manager for more information and to receive an asthma action plan.

Get Your Child's Asthma Ready for Back-to-School

Asthma affects about six million children. It is one of the top reasons for children to miss school. With the right care, you and your doctor can help get your child's asthma under control, helping him or her miss fewer days of school and feel better overall.

Tips on controlling your child's asthma at school:

- ▶ Ask your doctor or nurse care manager for an asthma action plan you can provide for your child's teachers and school (See back page for instructions on making one)
- ▶ Plan a meeting with your child's school and bring the action plan. People to have at the meeting are the school nurse, teacher and physical education teacher.
- ▶ Make sure your child always has his/her asthma medicine on-hand at school.
- ▶ Keep action plan updated with current information

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