

MANAGEMENT OF AN ACUTE ASTHMA EPISODE IN THE SCHOOL

Adapted from the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America (AAFA), Washington State Chapter, with permission

Asthma is the leading cause of absenteeism in school-aged children. A school-based asthma management program should allow children with asthma or allergies to participate in all school learning and recreational activities with few restrictions. An effective program will ultimately help to minimize school absences.

| WHAT TO LOOK FOR | WHAT TO LISTEN FOR |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Anxious look <input type="checkbox"/> Stooped body posture <input type="checkbox"/> Diaphoresis <input type="checkbox"/> Dyspnea <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid respirations (greater than 25-30 at rest) <input type="checkbox"/> Retractions <input type="checkbox"/> Nasal flaring <input type="checkbox"/> Depressed sternal notch <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea/vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue <input type="checkbox"/> Decreased peak flow value | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints of chest tightness <input type="checkbox"/> Coughing <input type="checkbox"/> Irregular breathing <input type="checkbox"/> Abnormal breathe sound: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased or absent breath sounds • Wheezing • Rales • Rhonchi <input type="checkbox"/> Prolonged expiration <input type="checkbox"/> Rapid heart rate |
| WHAT TO DO IN AN ASTHMA CRISIS AT SCHOOL | SEEK IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY CARE IF STUDENT: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If possible, review the student's Asthma Action Plan for Personal Best, current medications and emergency medications. <input type="checkbox"/> Have student sit upright and check breathing with peak flow meter—if possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Administer prescribed medication by inhaler (medication should be inhaled slowly and fully). OR <input type="checkbox"/> Administer medication by nebulizer if prescribed. <input type="checkbox"/> Reassure student and attempt to keep him/her calm and breathing slowly and deeply. <input type="checkbox"/> Student should respond to treatment within 15-20 minutes. Recheck with peak flow meter. <input type="checkbox"/> If NO change or breathing becomes significantly worse, contact parent immediately and call for emergency help. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Coughs constantly <input type="checkbox"/> Is unable to speak in complete sentences without taking a breath <input type="checkbox"/> Has lips, nails, mucous membranes that are gray or blue <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates severe retractions and/or nasal flaring <input type="checkbox"/> Is vomiting persistently <input type="checkbox"/> Has 50% reduced peak flow reading <input type="checkbox"/> Has pulse greater than 120/minute <input type="checkbox"/> Has respirations greater than 30/minute <input type="checkbox"/> Is severely restless <input type="checkbox"/> Shows no improvement after 15 minutes |