

Children & Exercise

If your child has asthma, be sure to do the following:

- Inform the physical education (PE) teacher or coach about what may trigger your child's asthma episodes.
- Tell him or her about recent asthma episodes so activity may be decreased or medication increased.
- Have a written asthma care plan (including what to do in case of an emergency) on file at school and with the PE teacher or coach.
- Talk with your child and learn his or her fears about asthma and exercise.
- Talk with the teacher, childcare provider, coach, school nurse and health care provider and ensure that your child is safely participating in physical activities.
- Talk with your doctor about your child taking medication before exercising to prevent breathing problems.

Wisconsin Statute 118.291
allows students with asthma to carry and use asthma medications while at school with written permission from their parent and doctor.

Exercising & Asthma

Remember the last time you ran up a flight of stairs and found yourself out of breath? Or the time you tried to swim a lap and had to stop short to catch some air? Exercise is hard work. But for people with asthma brought on by exercise, catching a breath after exercise may pose a bigger challenge, because people with asthma are not only dealing with their physical conditioning, they're dealing with a medical condition.

Asthma, What's It All About

When a person breathes in, or inhales, fresh air comes in through the nose or mouth and passes down through tubes (called bronchi) into the lungs. When you breathe out, or exhale, stale air from your lungs passes out through the same tubes. For most people, this exchange of air occurs without thought.

For people with asthma, however, breathing can be a constant challenge. The bronchial tubes of a person who has asthma are sensitive. They may react to smoke, pollen, dust, air pollution, allergies, or other "triggers" including exercise, by tightening and becoming inflamed and swollen. This tightening or swelling makes it difficult for air to pass easily through the bronchial tubes.

The Benefits of Exercise

Whether a person has asthma or not, regular exercise is healthy. Exercise trains the breathing muscles to work better. It helps a person maintain ideal body weight and helps the body work more efficiently--all of which helps a person feel better about him or herself. With proper precautions, almost anyone with asthma can participate in regular physical activity and have the opportunity to develop a healthy, active lifestyle. And through careful management of their asthma, individuals can become competitive athletes in any sport they choose.

Playing it Safe

Talk with your doctor about exercising with asthma. Find out if you would benefit from using your prescribed medication prior to physical activity. Play it safe, and remember to always have your emergency medication with you.

Choosing the right exercise, will help you enjoy exercising. Jogging, biking or playing tennis for example, may be too strenuous for some individuals who might do better with walking or swimming. Whatever you choose, be sure to monitor your activity and watch for warning signs such as coughing, wheezing, difficulty breathing and tightness of the chest. And don't forget to talk to your doctor to make sure the exercise you choose will provide the desired health benefits.



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