Your child has been diagnosed with Asthma or Reactive Airways Disease

**What does asthma mean?**

Asthma is a disease where the breathing tubes in the lungs may become swollen, narrowed and have increased mucous production. This makes it harder to breathe at times. Your child may seem fine most of the time. However, certain thing like colds, smoke, exercise, allergies, molds, carpets, pets, dust, and other **triggers** may cause a worsening of asthma symptoms.

**What are some symptoms of asthma?**

Cough that doesn’t seem to go away, night time cough, wheezing, trouble breathing, and cough with exercise are an example of some asthma symptoms.

**How often does my child need to be seen for their asthma?**

Children with asthma will need **two** asthma focused visits a year in addition to their annual physical. Unfortunately there is not enough time at a wellness visit to adequately address their asthma symptoms and medications. Guidelines for asthma management recommend an asthma focused visit at least every 6 months.

**What should I expect at my asthma focused visit?**

Your child (ages 8 and up) will have a pulmonary function test preformed as well as their annual flu vaccine during the flu season. The parent and/or the child will fill out a questionnaire asking about your child’s asthma symptoms, past medical history, medication, and any emergency room visits. Your provider will review the pulmonary function test and your questionnaire. They will examine your child and make any necessary changes to your child’s asthma plan. They will also give you an Asthma Action Plan with the date their recheck is due.

**When should my child be seen sooner than their scheduled asthma visit?**

My child should be seen by their medical provider if…

Their asthma keeps them from doing their normal daily activities.

They wake up at night with cough, wheeze, or trouble breathing.

They have coughing, wheezing, or trouble breathing more than twice a week.

They use their albuterol (ProAir, Proventil, Ventolin) more than twice a week.

They have a cold that is not resolving within 7-10 days or if they are waking up at night with coughing, wheezing, or trouble breathing.

This is not a comprehensive list. Each child is different. If you have any additional concerns, please call our office.

**What is the difference between a controller medication and a reliever medication?**

A **controller medication** is a medication that you take daily to prevent asthma symptoms. By taking this medication we hope to prevent asthma attacks and flare-ups during colds and other triggers. These medications work to reduce the swelling that may be present in the lungs. This swelling can contribute to asthma flare-ups. Untreated Asthma (RAD) can cause lung remodeling overtime.

A **reliever medication** is a quick acting medication called Albuterol (ProAir, Proventil, Ventolin). Albuterol can be given through an inhaler or a nebulizer machine. They are the exact same medication but just given in different ways. When a child is sick the nebulizer machine may work better to alleviate symptoms. This is a medication you take when you have persisting cough, wheezing or trouble breathing. It will help relieve your symptoms in a few minutes. If this medication does not help to relieve your symptoms, please call to set up an appointment.

**If my child seems to be doing better can we stop their daily medication?**

Please do not stop their daily asthma medication without consulting your medical provider first. We are happy that your child’s symptoms are better. This means the medication is working well. We will help you determine if your child can stop their daily medication at an asthma focused visit.

**Will my child grow out of their asthma?**

Some children do see their asthma symptoms lessen or resolve over time. Other children may need to be on a daily asthma medication for life. It is important to talk about your concerns with us and never stop your child’s asthma medications until you have discussed it with your medical provider.

Websites: <http://www.asthma-education.com/> <http://www.cdc.gov/asthma/children.htm>