

Asthma in the Classroom

Asthma Awareness in the classroom begins with knowing which students have **asthma**. If a student with asthma or any student complains of having trouble breathing and you think it may be related to asthma, **don't hesitate** to involve the school nurse.

COMMON ASTHMA TRIGGERS:

- **Allergens** such as pollution, animal dander, dust mites, and molds
- **Irritants** such as cold air, strong odors, weather changes, and cigarette smoke
- **Upper Respiratory Infections** such as cold or flu
- **Physical Exercise**, especially in cold weather

Each student's triggers can vary

EARLY WARNING SIGNS CAN INCLUDE:

- Wheezing
- Cough
- Chest tightness or pain in chest/back
- Shortness of breathe/difficulty breathing
- Little energy for active play

Each student's early warning signs can vary

Parents can provide help in identifying individual symptoms

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ALERT! Signs of a more serious episode
Immediately follow school emergency procedures!

- **Blue or gray tinged lips/fingernails**
- **Student cannot talk in sentences**
- **Neck or chest muscles/skin drawn in with each breath**
- **Student is breathing fast (15 breaths or more/30 seconds)**
- **Lightheadedness**

SCHOOL PERSONNEL PROCEDURE

Begin by alerting the School Nurse or designated caregiver. Remember to:

- Keep calm, reassure the student
- Have student sit down, lean forward, elbows on knees or assume posture most comfortable for him/her
- If the trigger can be identified, remove student or trigger from area

If a **School Nurse is not in the building full-time**, a plan should be worked out ahead of time on the procedure you are to follow

Early detection and treatment can lead to a less severe attack, preventing the need for emergency procedure.