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BATON ROUGE
Parents
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The Doctor Is In

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Asthma

Asthma is recurrent attacks of wheezing, coughing, chest tightness and difficulty breathing. Wheezing is a whistling sound heard while breathing out. It is often not diagnosed until after the first two years of life since many children wheeze at times with viral illnesses. The airways become narrow and spasm when allergic or irritating substances enter them causing swelling and mucus. Viral respiratory infections (colds) trigger many attacks in children. Other causes are allergens, tobacco smoke, exercise, environmental irritants and pollution.

Treatment: Asthma Medicines. Inhalers-Your child may be using more than one type of inhaler. One is usually for prevention and another is for rescue (to stop an attack once it has started). Always know the difference between your child's inhalers. Your doctor may prescribe a spacer to use with the inhaler to insure better technique. **Nebulizer treatments**-Your child may be too young or too severe into an attack to use an inhaler. Your doctor may have you use a nebulizer machine to deliver the asthma medicine to their lungs. **Oral medicines**-At times, oral medicines may be used for asthma. This may include steroids, or another asthma preventative medicine.

Guidelines: Some children with asthma only need medicines during asthma attacks. Others need their medicines all of the time. Your doctor will tell you how to do the medicine based on the duration, severity and frequency of your child's asthma symptoms. Peak flow meters can be a useful tool for you and your doctor to monitor your child's asthma symptoms.

Prevention: Try to discover and avoid the preventable triggers of your child's asthma attacks. The biggest offenders are exposure to tobacco smoke and allergens. Start on or step up medicines when symptoms begin or worsen. Always call your physician if your child does not improve with home therapies.



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