



State of New York  
George E. Pataki, Governor  
Department of Health

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., MPH, Dr. P.H. Commissioner

(continued)

- Do asthma attacks occur only in certain places? (home, school)

## THINK POSITIVE!

The good news is that with the right treatment, children with asthma can live with almost no limits on their activities. A good doctor will help you find your child's asthma triggers. Then, he or she will explain how the right medicine can help prevent asthma attacks and how to limit your child's exposure to germs and other asthma triggers.

Finding the right doctor and treatment plan can take time, but it is time well spent. Your efforts will help your child to be as healthy and as active as his or her asthma-free friends.

## FINDING HELP AND SUPPORT

To learn more about asthma, please contact the following agencies:

The American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

800-822-2762, [www.acaai.org](http://www.acaai.org)

Asthma and Allergy Network / Mothers of Asthmatics

800-878-4403, [www.aanma.org](http://www.aanma.org)

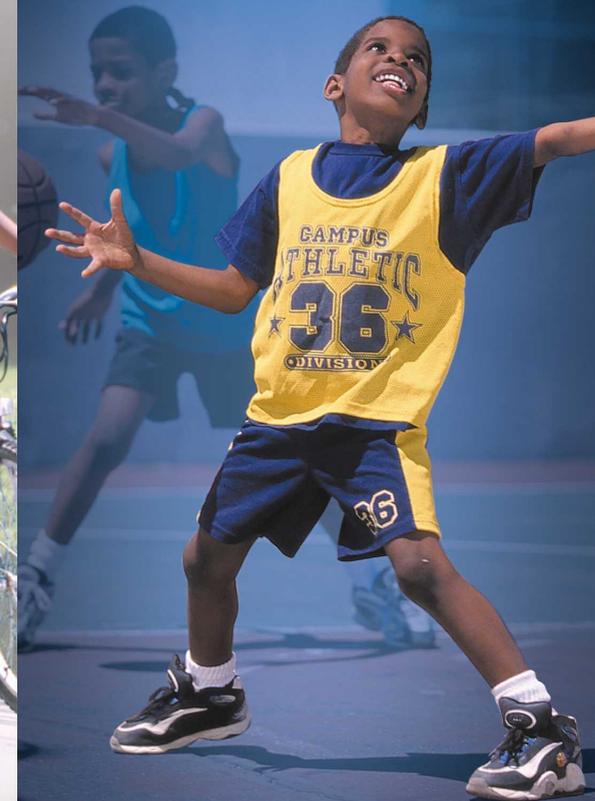
National Jewish Center's Lung Line,  
800-222-5864

Support for Asthmatic Youth, 516-625-5735

American Lung Association, 212-315-8700,  
[www.lungusa.org](http://www.lungusa.org)



# "Don't Let Asthma Knock the Wind Out of Your Child!"



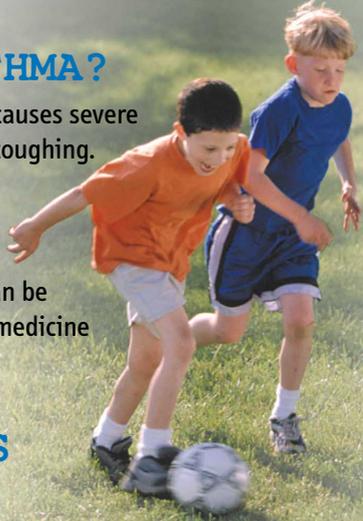
## WHAT IS ASTHMA?

Asthma is a disease that causes severe attacks of wheezing and coughing. One of every 10 American children has asthma. Although asthma cannot always be prevented, it can be controlled with the right medicine and information.

## WHAT CAUSES ASTHMA?

We don't always know what causes asthma. The causes of asthma are different from one person to another. The most common causes are:

- Smoke, mainly tobacco smoke
- Animal dander (small particles from fur, hair, feathers or skin)
- Mold
- Dust mites (microscopic animals that live in dust)
- Cockroaches and their droppings
- Viruses
- Sulfites (chemicals used for some soft drinks and processed foods to keep them fresh)



## WHAT ARE SOME SIGNS OF ASTHMA?

If your child has any of the following problems, he or she may have asthma:

- Wheezing
  - Begins suddenly
  - May be worse at night or in early morning
  - May get worse when exposed to cold air
  - May get worse during exercise
- Coughing
- Chest tightness
- Chest pain
- Shortness of breath
- Excess mucus

## ARE THERE ANY OTHER SYMPTOMS THAT MAY MEAN MY CHILD HAS ASTHMA?

Some other symptoms that are sometimes linked with asthma may include:

- Stuffy or runny nose
- Sinus problems
- Nasal polyps (growths inside the nose)

## CAN ASTHMA BE PREVENTED?

No matter how hard you try, asthma may not be prevented. However, you can limit your child's exposure to things that may trigger asthma, especially in the first years of life. You should:

- Make sure your home is kept smoke-free.

- Keep pets out of your child's bedroom and out of the house.
- Breastfeed as long as possible. Breast milk contains antibodies that can delay or even prevent allergies.
- Keep your child's bedroom as dust-free as possible.
- Read all food labels to avoid things to which your child may be allergic.

## CAN ASTHMA BE TREATED AND CONTROLLED?

Yes! Once you know your child has asthma, find one doctor that you and your child like, and see only that doctor for your asthma. The better your doctor knows your child, the better he or she can help control your child's asthma. The answers to the following questions can help your doctor to better treat your child's asthma:

- Do asthma attacks occur only in certain seasons or are they year-round?
- Does your child have sudden attacks or do they start out mild and get worse over time?
- How often does your child have an asthma attack?
- How long do the attacks last? (minutes, hours, days)
- Do asthma attacks occur at certain times of the day? (morning, evening)

