How to Help Your Child Control Asthma Attacks and Symptoms

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Childhood Asthma Management

Asthma is one of the most commonly diagnosed chronic medical conditions in children. While it is not possible to completely shield your child from asthma attacks, you should always strive to achieve what doctors call “well-controlled asthma.” Well-controlled asthma has five basic characteristics:

- Symptoms are absent or cause minimal discomfort.
- Very low incidence of asthma attacks.
- Few if any limitations on physical activity.
- Minimized side effects from asthma medications.
- Minimized use of emergency inhalers.

Well-controlled asthma is achieved by carefully following your child’s management plan, which will be prepared by his or her doctor. There are several fundamental pillars of childhood asthma management which you should expect to be part of any sound treatment plan.

Strategies for Managing Childhood Asthma

The following approaches to childhood asthma management are intended for children over the age of two. They begin with general lifestyle tips:

- calmly reassure your child that their asthma does not pose a major threat to their long-term health or ability to participate in normal childhood activities.
- Educate your child on the use of an inhaler to bring an acute attack under control.
- Carefully monitor your child’s lung function when he or she participates in sports or active play; note any asthma symptoms or evidence of compromised respiration and report them to your child’s doctor.
- Limit your child’s exposure to pet dander, airborne allergens, dust, mold, poor-quality outdoor air and smoke.
- Use hypoallergenic pillowcases, bed sheets and cleaning products in your home.

Then, incorporate additional respiratory health strategies to help reduce the frequency and severity of asthma attacks. These approaches include:

- Add a long-term, preventative control medication to your child’s treatment plan; options generally include drugs such as leukotriene modifiers, inhaled corticosteroids or corticosteroid-beta agonist combination drugs, and theophylline pills
- Ensure you always have an adequate supply of emergency treatment medications on hand; there’s no telling when an asthma attack might strike
- Manage your child’s allergies if they are contributing to his or her asthma; limiting or avoiding exposure to the known allergen and having your child get allergy shots are two effective strategies

Next, be sure to follow these important emergency care strategies if an asthma attack occurs:

- Use inhaled beta-agonists (corticosteroids) as the primary treatment option for an acute attack
- Always deliver emergency asthma medication through a properly pressurized and calibrated inhaler
- Begin by administering between 2 and 4 doses of inhaled medication every 20 to 30 minutes until symptoms subside
- If your child is having symptoms that do not subside after 10 doses of inhaled medication, he or she should see a doctor as soon as possible

Always remain in close communication with your child’s doctor and report all flare-ups and asthma attacks. Complications can develop with asthma, and it is very important to be proactive about managing the condition. Remember: what may seem like a relatively harmless asthma attack could be a sign of developing complications.