Where Does Asthma Occur?

What is Asthma?

Three changes which narrow airways make breathing difficult:

- Airway muscles tighten
- Inflammation and swelling increased
- Excess mucus production
Signs & Symptoms

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Distress / panic / anxiety
- Behaviour changes
- Rapid breathing
- Difficulty talking
- Tight chest
- Persistent cough
- Blue lips
- Pale and sweaty
- ‘Sore tummy’ in young children
- Sucking in of skin over chest/throat

Asthma symptoms will vary from person to person and from time to time for an individual.

Asthma Triggers

- Colds and flu
- Exercise / activity
- Smoke
- Pollens / moulds
- Animals / pets
- Changes to weather / air temperature
- Dust and Dust mites
- Deodorants / perfumes
- Chemicals
- Foods / additives
- Certain medication
- Emotions

Knowing students’ asthma triggers contributes to good asthma management
Asthma Medications

**Reliever**

- Relaxes airway muscles
- Works in minutes
- Used in asthma emergency
- Carried by students and in Asthma Emergency Kits
- Use over 3x per week indicates poor asthma control

*Use When Needed*

**Preventer**

- Reduces inflammation
- Can take weeks to take effect
- NOT for asthma emergency
- May be seen on excursions & camps
- Prescribed medications

*Used Daily (usually morning & night)*
Spacers

Why Use A Spacer?
• Recommended for everyone who uses a puffer
• Greatly increases medication reaching airways
• Reduces medication deposited in mouth and throat

Recognizing & Assessing an Asthma Attack

Mild
• Cough
• Soft wheeze
• Minor trouble breathing
• Talks in sentences

Moderate
• Persistent Cough
• Loud wheeze
• Difficulty breathing
• Shortened sentences

Administer First Aid for all attacks.
Treating a mild / moderate attack may prevent escalation to severe.
Recognizing & Assessing an Asthma Attack

Severe
- Wheeze may be absent
- Distressed / anxious
- Pale / sweaty / blue lips
- Gasping for breath
- Few words per breath
- Sucking in of skin over ribs / throat

A severe asthma attack is life threatening. Commence Asthma First Aid and ALWAYS call an ambulance.