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## **General Asthma Information**

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### **What is Asthma?**

Asthma is a condition where the bronchial tubes or windpipes get too narrow and block the flow of air, making breathing difficult. Often, asthma is an inflammatory condition and control of inflammation will control the asthma.

3 things cause the narrowing of the bronchial tubes:

1. The muscles around the tubes tighten
2. The inside lining of the tubes swells
3. Too much mucous is made which clogs the tubes

### **How Should Asthma Affect Life?**

With the proper treatment plan you should be able to have a totally normal lifestyle. You should:

- Be able to attend work or school everyday.
- Be able to exercise without a problem.
- Be able to sleep well through the night.
- Not need emergency visits to the doctor.
- Not need hospitalization for asthma.
- Not be afraid of asthma.

### **How Can You Determine Your Asthma Is Not Well Controlled?**

If you have any of the following your asthma is not well controlled and we need to work with you to improve control.

1. You are having symptoms of your asthma (shortness of breath, chest tightness, coughing, wheezing etc) more than 2 days a week.
2. Symptoms of asthma are interrupting your sleep more than 2 nights a month.
3. You have some limitation of your normal daily activities because of asthma symptoms.
4. You need to use your reliever (rescue) inhaler more than twice a week.
5. You have more than 1 exacerbation per year requiring oral systemic corticosteroids or you need to be evaluated in the emergency room/urgent care clinic for your asthma.

### **How Can You Help Your Doctor Treat Your Asthma?**

1. Avoid things which worsen asthma such as smoke and things you are allergic to (animals, dust, molds).
2. Take medication that your doctor prescribes without changing the dose or schedule.
3. Keep scheduled appointments

## **How Do You Use Your Inhalers?**

1. In General if you are using a medication that requires you to press down on a canister and the medication is directed out of the mouthpiece in the form of a mist....
  - a. Shake the canister well just before each spray.
  - b. Uncap the mouthpiece of the inhaler. Breathe out fully. Put the mouthpiece into your mouth and close your lips around the mouthpiece. Breathe in slowly while pushing down on the canister at the start of your inhalation. Continue to breathe in slowly over six seconds until you are full. Once you are full, hold your breath for 10 seconds.
  - c. If you use more than one inhalation at a time, wait at least 1 minute before using the second inhalation and shake the inhaler before each use.
  - d. Rinse your mouth with water, gargle and spit out.
  - e. Keep your inhaler clean and dry, and store it with the cap on the mouthpiece. Clean your inhaler once a week as instructed in the package insert.
2. In General if you are using a medication that is a dry powdered inhaler (pulmicort, advair diskus, asmanex, flovent diskus, foradil etc)....
  - a. Load the dose as described on the package insert.
  - b. Turn away from the inhaler and breathe out. Then place the mouthpiece in your mouth, close your lips around it, and inhale forcefully and deeply all the way until you are full. Hold your breath for 10 seconds.
  - c. Rinse your mouth with water, gargle and spit.
3. We will discuss the specific use of each inhaler in clinic. Please call if you have further questions at 312-922-3815.

## **What Are Some Possible Side Effects of My Inhalers?**

1. Reliever (rescue) inhalers and some controller inhalers may cause shaking hands.
2. Controller inhalers may cause oral thrush, hoarseness, or throat irritation.
3. Other rare side effects are listed on the package insert of each specific medication.
4. Call your doctor (312-922-3815) if you are experiencing these or any other side effects.