Managing Asthma

Although there is no cure for asthma, it can be controlled through proper education and management. Asthma affects each child differently, so it is important to know his/her warning signs and triggers.

WARNING SIGNS

Warning signs are symptoms that show a child is having difficulty with asthma. Every child has their own unique set of warning signs. Recognize and know what level of action to take when you see a warning sign.

Level I: These are common warning signs that happen early in an episode.

- Shortness of breath
- Cough
- Feeling tired or weak
- Itchy chin or throat
- Watery eyes
- Dark circles under eyes
- Stomachache

**HOW TO RESPOND**

1) Move child away from any triggers. If child is around something that bothers their asthma, try to leave the situation.
2) Administer quick-relief medication to relieve symptoms. Medicine should work within 15 minutes.
3) Monitor child's warning signs. Make sure symptoms aren't getting worse.

Level II: These common warning signs and symptoms are more serious.

- Medications are not working or do not last
- Increase in coughing or tightness in chest
- Wheezing
- Inability to do usual activities

**HOW TO RESPOND**

1) Take the same steps as with Level I. Move away from triggers, take quick-relief medication and monitor warning signs.
2) If symptoms worsen or are not better within 15 minutes of using medication, follow child's asthma action plan and consider calling 911.

Level III: These are common severe warning signs and symptoms.

- Severe shortness of breath
- Difficulty walking or talking (inability to finish a sentence)
- Retractions (bucking in skin at ribs and neck)
- Failing, blue or gray lips and nail beds

**HOW TO RESPOND**

1) Call 911. Any ONE of these symptoms requires immediate medical help.
2) If you haven't already, administer quick-relief medication.